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Nuke Freeze Fever

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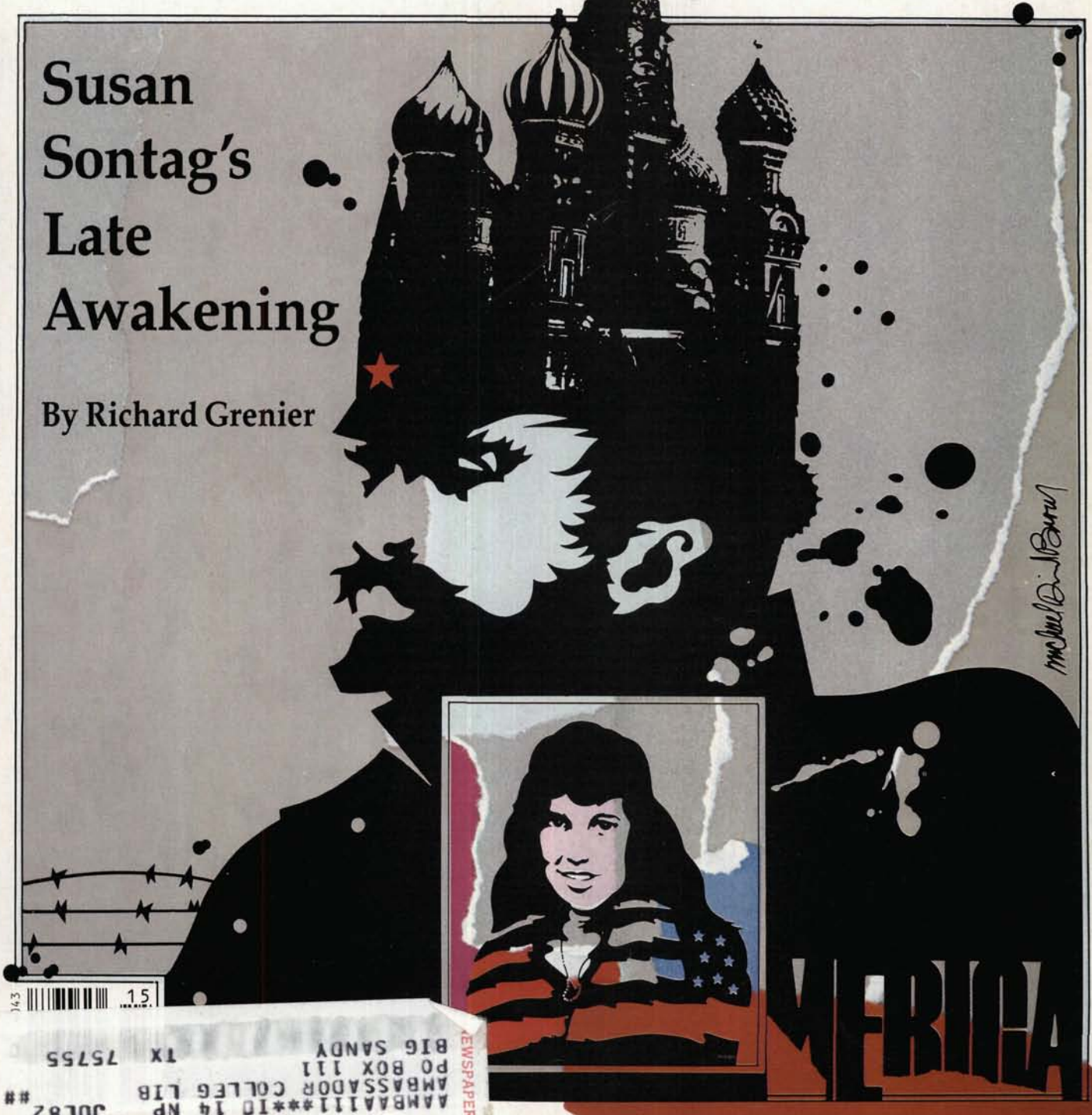
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Susan Sontag's Late Awakening

By Richard Grenier



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NEWSPAPER

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CORRESPONDENCE

LAME-BRAIN

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke's conclusions about the President's intellectual capacities ("Reagan's I.Q.," TNR, March 24) are surprisingly complacent. The President's inability to master complexity and his sovereign ignorance and invincible provincialism are crippling. They do not, alas, only cripple him. They render the nation quite unable to go about its business, as well as seriously diminish our stock in the world. To be sure, there is an area in which the President manifests large talents: he is a vicious opponent. The scarcely veiled anti-Semitism of the campaign for the Saudi Awacs aircraft, threats to the media and the systematic denigration of critics, brutal (and lying) anecdotes about the disadvantaged, suggest that as the President sinks, he and his servitors will become increasingly savage. What can, and should, be done to safeguard our public life in that event are matters for debate. No useful purpose is served, however, by ignoring the problem.

Norman Birnbaum
Georgetown University Law Center
Washington, D.C.

HUMAN WASTELAND

To the editors:

M.P.'s last paragraph in the Washington Diarist ("Let Them Eat Brioche," TNR, March 31) was of interest to me in that I have been working in the midst of such a human wasteland for the last eight years. The editor's muted plea for a party platform (read government policy) to deal with this problem strikes me as naive and implies more of the usual condescending liberal prepotency.

The wasteland is not a problem, it *is* a solution. It is the solution, by the inhabitants, to twenty years of liberal and conservative policies that support an antihuman militarism, an economy based on vacuous consumerism, homogenized public "training" rather than education, and paternalistic social schemes, with oppressive bureaucracies to run them all.

In the wasteland almost all institutional authority figures are seen as "the government" and are to be feared, ignored, or ripped off. Culture in the wasteland is no-culture; babies are status symbols whose variable growth and development provide a fleeting competitive interest; crime is the economy; and disenfranchisement becomes the politics.

M.P.'s conscience is showing and that's nice. I wish him good luck with a platform.

Mark J. Sey, M.D.
St. Mary Hospital
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

BUDGETS, THEN AND NOW

To the editors:

John Kenneth Galbraith's critique of the Reagan budget ("The Budget and the Bust," TNR, March 17) illustrates a troubling pattern among liberal economists to oppose economic stimulus in a deep recession, perhaps because it is a conservative Republican President who is proposing the large fiscal stimulus. In arguing that Reagan's expansionary tax cuts are inappropriate in contrast to the Kennedy-Johnson tax cuts, Galbraith points to the low interest rates and near stable prices of the mid-1960s. He omits these facts: the gap between potential and actual output is far wider today than in 1964; unemployment rates are near 9 percent today but were only 5.2 percent in 1964; capacity utilization is near 70 percent today but was over 80 percent in 1964; and today's inflation rates are coming down rapidly. Even were the Reagan budget to prevail, projections for 1983 show that actual GNP will still fall about $230 billion short of potential GNP. In this setting, we need a looser monetary policy *in addition to*, not instead of, an expansionary fiscal policy.

Robert I. Lerman
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

THE BUSING DEBATE (CONT.)

To the editors:

Whether or not segregation is demonstrably intentional, it is an evil. Both THE NEW REPUBLIC and Nathan Glazer ignore this truth ("Backing the Bus," TNR, February 24) in attempting to examine school integration policy.

The Supreme Court never made a differentiation in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* between the harms of segregation proven to be intentional and the harms of segregation only circumstantial. The decision only notes that "the sanction of law" makes the harm that much greater. Unfortunately, courts only mandate constitutionally required remedies, which in this case limits school integration programs to districts which have been proven to be intentionally segregated.

This de jure/de facto distinction keeps America from integration; where proof of intentional discrimination is virtually impossible, multidistrict metropolitan areas remain segregated. Vernon Jordan explained that "by refusing to sanction metropolitan-wide desegregation plans, and by demanding positive proof of discriminatory intent, the Supreme Court has effectively limited the application of the *Brown* decision. It has built walls around inner-city school systems." Yet we continue to rely on the courts to attempt integration. We need to go beyond what the courts interpret as constitutionally necessary.

Unfortunately, Congress and many Americans misconstrue the issues. Many feel, like Mr. Glazer, that integration, as "reverse discrimination," should be abolished. School segregation is but one symptom of a society long suffering from all forms of racial discrimination. Only when blacks are complete equals in our society can we truly be color-blind; however, blacks start in an inferior position today. To be truly color-blind would condemn another generation of blacks to second-class citizenship.

THE NEW REPUBLIC provides an excellent analysis of the issues surrounding integration. The editorial's only flaw is its reluctance to advocate the strongest possible integration approach. To make all Americans equal: this is the challenge of the future. We can start on that path by making *all* segregation illegal.

Sherman Dorn, student
Corona del Mar High School
Corona del Mar, California

To the editors:

Regrettably, it is Nathan Glazer who is "either naive or disingenuous" in his letter (TNR, March 17), not your editorial "Backing the Bus."

First, Mr. Glazer takes your editorial to task for saying that courts issue busing orders "when local school authorities shirk their responsibility to come

continued on page 4

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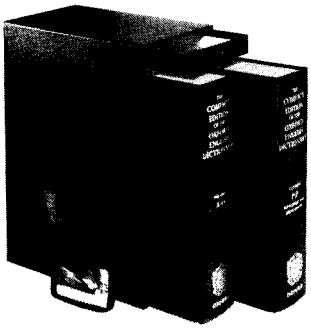

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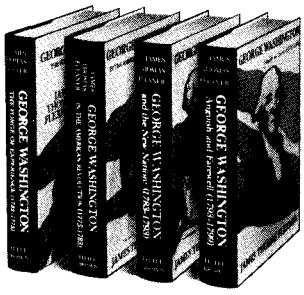

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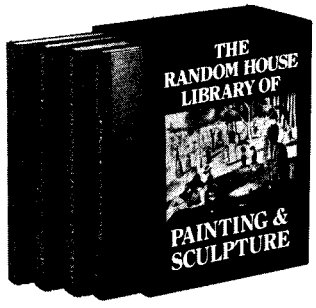

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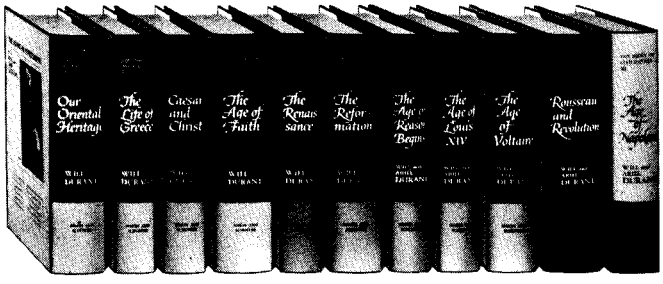

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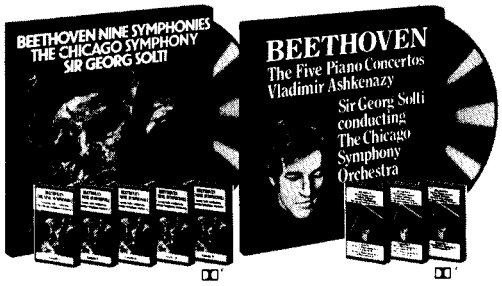

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

up with effective plans to remedy proven acts of deliberate segregation." He states flatly that "[t]here were no 'proven acts of deliberate segregation' in San Francisco, Denver, Cleveland, Detroit, and many other cities." That statement is simply untrue. The leading case is *Keyes* v. *School District No. 1* (1973), in which the Supreme Court affirmed findings that the Denver school district engaged in "an unconstitutional policy of deliberate racial segregation" in a significant part of the district. It did so by concentrating black students in certain schools; building schools with conscious knowledge that they would open racially segregated; assigning minority teachers and staff only to minority schools; and using mobile classrooms, transfer policies, and transportation on racially identifiable bases to earmark certain schools as minority schools. Similar findings undergird relief ordered in Cleveland and Detroit. Indeed, in the San Francisco school case, the Ninth Circuit vacated the district court's remedial order precisely because the court had failed to determine if acts of the school board were committed with a purpose or intent to segregate. Furthermore, in two 1979 Ohio cases, the Supreme Court reiterated that only purposeful segregation by a school district is remediable.

Second, contrary to Mr. Glazer's suggestion, the Supreme Court's opinions (in *Keyes, Penick*, and *Brinkman*) expressly address the question of proof of discrimination, and require the federal courts to weigh evidence of school board acts and omissions carefully in order to make particularized findings on whether intentional or purposeful discrimination has been proved.

The law has long been that: "Absent a constitutional violation, there would be no basis for judicially ordering assignment of students on a racial basis. All things being equal, with no history of discrimination, it might well be desirable to assign pupils to schools nearest their homes. But all things are not equal in a system that has been deliberately constructed and maintained to enforce racial segregation. . . . 'Racially neutral' assignment plans proposed by school authorities to a district court may be inadequate; such plans may fail to counteract the continuing effects of past school segregation resulting from discriminatory location of school sites or distortion of school size in order to achieve or maintain an artificial racial separation" (*Swann* v. *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, [1971]).

Jack Greenberg, director-counsel
NAACP Legal Defense and
Educational Fund
New York, New York

COVERING NANCY

To the editors:

The cover on the March 24 issue of TNR is a disgrace to your profession. It is cruel and vulgar to attack politicians through their wives. The Republicans did it to Ed Muskie, to their shame. And now the liberals are doing it. The President and the public deserve an apology!

Charlotte Snelson
Ojai, California

To the editors:

This is to compliment you and the artist, Donald Gates, on the spectacular cover on the March 24 issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC—so wholly appropriate! It is a clear and true creation of the image that Nancy Reagan projects. She is an attractive lady, and that fact is not overlooked in this portrayal of her expensive tastes and devotion to high fashion. But what of the poor, the truly needy, or even the average individual? They are lost sight of; indeed one doubts she is even conscious of their existence.

Frances T. F. Cruz
Mason City, Iowa

To the editors:

I greatly appreciate Nick Kotz's article, "The War on the Poor" (TNR, March 24). It said a lot of things that badly need to be said—and clearly. But that cartoon of Nancy Reagan was an act of barbaric taste.

John Holden
Montpelier, Vermont

MORE CATHOLIC THAN THOU

To the editors:

Since Czeslaw Milosz is a Nobel Prize recipient in Literature, it is difficult to understand how his article, "On Catholicism" (TNR, February 24), could be so wrongheaded and farfetched concerning what Catholicism really is.

Mr. Milosz's theme seems to be that most, maybe all, Catholics have, or should have, difficulties with their religious belief and its consequences. I do not agree with Mr. Milosz's contention that "in a moment of sincerity nearly every Catholic would no doubt admit that he is unable to unite the separate points of doctrine." As Mr. Milosz should know, the accepting and uniting of doctrine difficult to comprehend and imagine is accomplished by religious persons, including Catholics, by that intellectual assent called faith.

Mr. Milosz makes the flat statement that "not taking part in Sunday mass is a mortal sin and before receiving the Eucharist must be absolved . . . through confession," i.e., a very serious matter. Since Mr. Milosz was "raised in the Catholic religion," he should know the Church is not that harsh, and that the statement is correct *only* if there is no acceptable excuse for the absence, such as sickness, old age, or the obligation to be somewhere else such as work, and is the result of a deliberate refusal to attend with a full consent of the will. For example, to forget to go to Sunday mass may be an act of thoughtlessness and indicate a possible lack of gratitude, but it is not necessarily a sin, and certainly not a mortal one requiring absolution through confession. Mr. Milosz also says that "the faithful cannot grasp the meaning of Original Sin . . . nor can they grasp the meaning of sin in general." Note that this statement means that *all* faithful are ignorant of this fundamental concept of Christianity. The remark is so patently false that any commentary seems unnecessary and a waste of time. Does it include the Pope, bishops, and priests, or only lay people? Are we discussing only illiterate peasants? Don't even the illiterate have eyes to see the results of sin around them and the feelings in their own hearts of its force and meaning?

I assume from the conclusion of Czeslaw Milosz's essay that he is the one who falls asleep over St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, or is this another fictitious character and situation? If he is the person, I suggest Gilbert Chesterton, then Etienne Gilson on Aquinas as more lively commentators. The other alternative is not to write about Catholicism.

James J. Guthrie
Lowell, Massachusetts

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number; should be typed double-spaced; and should be held to under 200 words.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

NEO-HOOVERISM

We take as our text today that wonderful quotation from Andrew Mellon, the Pittsburgh industrialist who in 1929 was the richest man in Washington: "The prosperity of the middle classes depends on the good fortune and light taxes of the rich." Through the device of the loudspeaker, just invented, some 200,000 people heard Hoover's spoken "I do," when he took the oath as President on that moist March day from benevolent Chief Justice William Howard Taft. With a man like Mellon in his Cabinet, who could doubt that the Hoover incumbency would be a success? Earlier in his acceptance speech, Hoover delivered the tingling line, "We shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation!" Here was the Great Engineer, saying goodbye to poverty! He meant it, too, and said it reverently. We believed him. Then, of course, came the Crash.

It is half a century later now, and we still haven't banished poverty, but the Mellon theory of aiding the nation by promoting "light taxes of the rich" is still alive. It is called the trickle-down theory. Poor Hoover hunted around for a milder synonym for "crisis" or "panic," and succeeded in putting a capital letter on the nightmare word "Depression" that makes Wall Street shudder even now.

Forecasters sidle up gingerly to the economic reports they are receiving on the nation's condition. Most hedge their bets. One of the ablest, Otto Eckstein of Data Resources Inc., thinks the economic test of 1982 will come in the third quarter. He is optimistic, but he can't be sure: is the economy recovering, or is "stagflation, deeper recession, or even a mild depression" (there's that word again!) taking over?

What is striking is the kind of minimal leadership that is coming from the White House. It is hard to recall anything quite like it. Reagan is attached to the budget he sent to Congress (deficit and all), and Republican leaders say it can't pass. We have waited week after week for the usual compromise that settles these things. It hasn't come. So now the Republican-led Senate Budget Committee is momentarily writing its own alternative: "Hope springs eternal that we'll make some headway with the White House before we move too far along here," explains chairman Pete Domenici, Republican of New Mexico. It's hard to imagine an utterance like that coming to Republican Hoover from Republican Reed Smoot (chairman of the Finance Committee) back in the dangerous days of 1929.

Reagan is adopting a new way of communicating with the nation, one that you may have sampled before you read this. His brief reports will resemble the radio fireside chats of FDR, which were brilliantly successful. Roosevelt took the listener right into the living room with him and gave his version of complex problems in low-keyed explanations. Can Reagan do as well? The country was less sophisticated then and families gathered around the Atwater Kent to listen to a quiet-voiced father figure.

Criticism of Reagan in poll after poll tends to take the same form: he has succeeded in reducing the rate of inflation by the old-fashioned device of increasing unemployment and slowing the economy. Tax cuts for those with incomes of $80,000 or more, according to an analysis by *Newsweek*, would save them $15,000, but the $10,000-wage-earner would experience a net loss in federal services of about $240. Cuts in food stamps, Medicaid, jobs programs, housing subsidies, nutrition programs, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children have been made or lie ahead. Social Security, the biggest income transfer entitlement of them all, is left intact. It takes one-fifth of the entire U.S. budget. TRB has uncomfortable first-hand experience with this. Because of his venerable years, TRB gets

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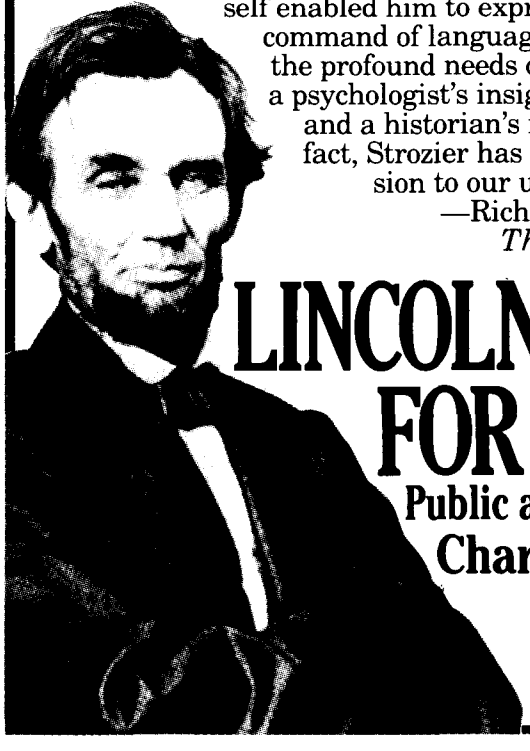
—Richard N. Current, author of *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*



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APRIL 14, 1982

UNFREEZE ARMS CONTROL

Everyone is for the freeze: first it was the good burghers of Vermont, then Edward Kennedy and nineteen other senators, and now Henry Jackson, Sam Nunn, John Warner, and a cluster of other co-sponsors. Even Leonid Brezhnev is for a freeze of sorts. And no wonder. As the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, the St. Louis-based "clearinghouse" for the grass-roots antinuke crusade, puts it on its letterhead: "The freeze: because nobody wants a nuclear war."

The power of that slogan lies in its simplicity and its implication that only those who want nuclear war could oppose a freeze. Not surprisingly, therefore, when the freeze bandwagon finally pulled into Washington, every politician in town scrambled to jump on board. Consequently, the question is no longer: "Are you for a freeze?" but "What kind of freeze are you for?" Freezes now come in many varieties. The differences, though subtle, are crucial.

One proposal is from the grass-roots freeze campaign. Its objective is "a mutual freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons." In other words, a total ceasefire-in-place in the arms race. This proposal has been adopted by scores of town meetings, sixty-nine Catholic bishops, the YMCA, Linus Pauling, and so on. This proposal also inspired the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution, which is closely modeled on it.

The other major proposal is the Warner-Jackson resolution. Sensing that the freeze movement might overwhelm Washington and undermine the delicate strategic balance hammered out in two decades of negotiations, Warner and Jackson and other serious advocates of a strong defense proposed a freeze of their own: "a long-term and mutually verifiable nuclear forces freeze at equal and sharply reduced levels of forces." The key word here is "equal." It means that some ceasefire lines must be straightened out and some obsolete weapons system modernized to assure the preservation of stable deterrence. That is the traditional approach of the SALT treaties and the soon-to-be-announced START negotiations. We believe it is the only responsible way to approach arms control.

As an expression of general concern, the halt-in-place freeze is laudable. First, it provides the opportunity that every generation needs to rethink and debate nuclear weapons policy. SALT II should have provided that chance, but its provisions were so esoteric and the debate so technical that it turned into an intramural discussion by the experts and never really touched the American people. We have not had a true national debate on nuclear weapons since the ABM days of the late Johnson and early Nixon Administrations. The freeze campaign has also mobilized the energies of vast numbers of well-intentioned Americans who are concerned about the possibility of nuclear catastrophe. The popular pressures it has generated in the country and in Congress have already had the salutory effect of pushing the Administration finally to engage the Soviets in strategic arms talks.

But as a practical proposal, the halt-in-place freeze is a disaster. First, it is unverifiable. The freeze resolution tries to solve this problem by denying it. "This is an essential, verifiable first step. . . ." Simple assertions, however, will not do. The production of nuclear weapons, for example, is exceedingly difficult to verify without on-site inspection. The USSR has consistently reiterated its opposition to on-site inspection. Thus one is faced with either abandoning the freeze proposal or abandoning the commitment to verifiability.

Second, a global halt-in-place effectively cancels the Reagan Administration's bold stroke in arms control, the zero-option offer on intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe. Last November the President offered to cancel planned American deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles if the Soviets agreed to dismantle their SS-20s, three hundred accurate and mobile nuclear missiles based in Eastern Europe and aimed at West European cities. Leonid Brezhnev's counteroffer is also a "freeze" (the

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Kremlin media adviser had done his homework): keep things as they are in Europe, with the Soviets allowed three hundred missiles on the ground and the U.S. zero. We are now engaged in negotiations at Geneva to resolve the issue. If the halt-in-place idea were to prevail in Washington, however, we wouldn't need negotiations in Geneva. The issue would be settled with a Soviet victory and a precedent would be set for future talks, encouraging the Soviets to stall until political pressures in the West forced a collapse. The Soviets are stalling now in Geneva, but Senator Kennedy, complaining about slow progress, makes it sound as if the fault were ours.

Collapse of the U.S. position at Geneva would also cause disarray in the NATO alliance. Helmut Schmidt and other European leaders have gone out on a limb to support the U.S. position on intermediate nuclear weapons. If they find that limb sawed off by the U.S. freeze movement, just as it was in the neutron bomb affair by Carter, they could be forgiven if they never again risked their political futures on U.S. promises.

BUT THERE EXISTS an even more fundamental problem with the halt-in-place proposal. It ignores the requirement of deterrence, which has proved the only guarantor of peace in the nuclear age. The proposal is based on a simple notion that as long as each side has enough megatonnage to destroy the other, everything else is useless overkill. It assumes that as long as we have the capacity to knock out Soviet cities, we have deterrence. But deterrence requires the capacity to destroy the other side *after a first strike*. The key element in deterrence is survivability of retaliatory capacity. In a crisis, nuclear war will not start because of numbers, because one side has, say, ten times overkill capacity as opposed to five. Nuclear war becomes more probable when the threat of retaliation becomes less credible. If one side begins to lose its capacity to deliver a second strike, the other side might be tempted in a crisis to strike first. But even more dangerous is the temptation on the side with the diminished retaliatory capacity to launch a preemptive first strike in a crisis before it is too late. Thus, those really concerned with decreasing the chances of nuclear war should focus less on absolute numbers than on the survivability of our strategic deterrent.

The halt-in-place is a threat to stability because it will ultimately jeopardize the survivability of America's retaliatory capacity. The Soviets will soon have a credible capacity for a first strike against one portion of the U.S. deterrent, the land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. (That was the reason for the Carter Administration's Rube Goldberg mobile MX missile plan, now scrapped.) That will leave the U.S. dependent on the two remaining legs of the triad: the bomber force and submarines. The bomber force of old B-52s is rapidly losing its capacity to penetrate Soviet air space. The freeze would prevent us from modernizing the bomber force with new planes (like the B-1 or the Stealth) and cruise missiles. So America's deterrent capability basically would be in one basket—submarines. Our subs are now the most survivable leg of our strategic triad, but the freeze would prevent attempts to assure their long-term invulnerability. At the same time it would do nothing to prevent nonnuclear antisubmarine research.

The aim of arms negotiations is to decrease the chances of nuclear war, not simply to fix numbers. And the way to decrease those chances is to ensure deterrence. The freeze, pure and simple, would jeopardize deterrence. We recognize that the concept of deterrence is less satisfying emotionally, and more difficult intellectually, than the freeze. It also takes longer to explain and makes for duller copy than dramatic prophesies of the coming apocalypse. But our survival is at stake, and citizens and senators will simply have to cool their emotions and think.

The Jackson proposal, with its emphasis on freezing at "equal" levels of forces, appears to accept the complexities of deterrence. We would prefer language that talks of "stable" levels of forces, assuring deterrent capacity to both sides. But we should be doing more than simply engaging in linguistic jockeying to come up with a formula that incorporates the classic concepts of arms control while using the word "freeze." The Administration has a duty to devise an alternative, both to allay the fears of those disturbed by the prospect of nuclear war and to control the mutual suspicion and economic drain caused by the arms race. The Administration could resume talks on SALT II. The U.S. and the Soviet Union are still tacitly observing the treaty, but this will not last long. The President could send a letter to Brezhnev affirming U.S. determination to abide by SALT II until minor changes can be negotiated and a new agreement signed. The Administration also should propose further talks to reduce strategic arsenals. The failure of SALT and delays on START are in large part responsible for the U.S. and European freeze movements. If the Administration wishes to defuse those movements, it needs to get on with arms control.

If the Administration has duties, so does the opposition. Everyone is against nuclear war. Everyone is moved when Hiroshima survivors tell senators of its horrors. But carefully staged media events, such as the antinuke doctors' lectures featuring enormous blowups of terribly scarred nuclear survivors, tread a thin line. To insist on the unimaginable destructiveness of nuclear war is one thing; to traffic in a pornography of suffering to draw an audience is another. It is simply not enough to hold hearings or to publish pamphlets showing that nuclear war is horrible. After hearing the testimony of Hiroshima survivors, Senator Kennedy observed that discussions of megatonnage and throw weight and the window of vulnerability seem beside the point. However heartfelt these comments, it is irresponsible for politicians to ignore megatonnage

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and throw weight and windows of vulnerability. Preventing nuclear war requires more than fear. It requires a conscious strategy, the political will to carry it out, and a sense of public duty to explain to the voters the unpleasant, complex world of deterrence. Unfortunately, many political leaders see the peace train leaving the station and they must run to keep up with their followers.

Elections Count

Salvadorans went to the polls last week. The guerrillas voted with their guns, trying to disrupt the elections. They succeeded in only a few places. The vast majority of the Salvadoran people turned out at the polls in overwhelming numbers in spite of the threats. The exercise of free elections is a rare enough event in Central America. Guatemala doesn't seem to be able to honor the results for more than a couple of weeks. Nicaragua has no use for them at all. Therefore, when in the middle of a civil war an election takes place that is deemed by dozens of neutral observers to have been fair, we see reason for celebration. And when a full-page ad appears in the *New York Times* on election day, calling for the total withdrawal of U.S. support for the regime which had just carried out the election, we see reason for dismay. Predictably, the ad was signed by many with long histories of affection for third world progressives for whom "free elections" is an oxymoron: Abby Hoffman, Bella Abzug, William Sloane Coffin, Andrew Young. That didn't surprise us. But we were surprised—and doubly dismayed—to find among the signatories such respected democrats as Irving Howe, Michael Harrington, Robert Drinan, and Robert Dahl. True, the Salvadoran election did not enjoy the participation of the guerrillas, but it was the first honest election in that country in half a century. And if the guerrillas come to power—as they certainly will if U.S. aid is cut off—it will be the last honest election for another half-century. The Salvadoran people who waited hours in lines and braved guerrilla threats to participate for the first time in a democratic process deserve more than a cavalier dismissal from committed social democrats in this country.

What did these American friends offer the Salvadorans as an alternative? They proposed, in addition to a cutoff of U.S. aid, such fatuous solutions as support for a Congressional resolution "calling for an internationally supervised ceasefire and negotiated settlement"—as if ceasefires and negotiated settlements can be legislated into existence by the U.S. Congress, and as if withdrawal of U.S. support would not extinguish what chances there are for a democratic, pluralist regime to emerge in El Salvador. We disagree with the Administration's characterization of the El Salvador civil war as an East-West confrontation. But we applaud its support of those forces led by José Napoleón Duarte who are committed to democracy, pluralism, and land reform.

It might turn out that the Salvadoran constituent assembly will be controlled by the far right. But if so, it will be in no small measure because of the election boycott by the moderate left. The Christian Democrats won more than 40 percent of the vote. In alliance with the democratic left, they would almost certainly have won control of the government. As things stand now, it looks as if Duarte will be maneuvered out by the extreme right. It is a lesson for the future. Guillermo Ungo and the democratic left will undoubtedly suffer the same fate one day if and when their guerrilla colleagues seize power. May we then expect another full-page ad in the *New York Times* deploring the absence of democracy in El Salvador?

Notebook

□ "IT'S NOT A HUMANITARIAN award. It's called the Charles Evans Hughes Gold Medal for Courageous Leadership in Governmental, Civic, and Humanitarian Affairs," fumed Dr. Harry Robinson, vice president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Upon presenting the award to Ronald Reagan last week in New York, the conference was besieged by irate editorials and public demonstrations. Dr. Robinson claims that these protestations are misguided, since the medal honors more than humanitarian achievements. He does concede, however, that the decision was made a long time ago. "Look, how were we to know what [Reagan] was going to be like?" To avoid future hubbubs, we recommend that the conference rename the award the "Charles Evans Hughes Gold Medal for Courageous Leadership in Governmental, Civic, and Humanitarian Affairs—or two out of three."

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "My goal is the ideal; my object is to put economic considerations into a back seat; but my method at this moment of economic and social evolution would be to advance toward the goal by concentrating on doing what is economically sound. But there are others, I know, who would prefer, even today, to advocate what is economically unsound, because they believe that this is the best way to gain political power (which in any case is the first step), and that to render the existing system unworkable is the only means of reaching a new system. In my judgment both these notions are false; because the ruin of the old system, so far from making the construction of the new technically easier, may on the contrary make it impossible. For it will have to be on the basis of increased resources, not on the basis of poverty, that the grand experiment of the Ideal Republic will have to be made." ("The Dilemma of Modern Socialism," by John Maynard Keynes, April 13, 1932.)

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WHITE HOUSE WATCH

REAGAN'S POLICY MEN

ON THE SECOND floor of the White House's West Wing, near the southeast corner overlooking the Rose Garden, is a wood-paneled and low-ceilinged office that has the appearance of a ship captain's cabin. During the Nixon Administration, when the office was occupied by John Ehrlichman, it actually was the domestic policy cockpit of the government. It remained an important locus of policymaking and coordination under Jimmy Carter's domestic adviser, Stuart Eizenstat, but its power seemed to dwindle suddenly in January 1981, when Ronald Reagan installed his campaign issues adviser, Martin Anderson, as assistant to the President for policy development. To the dismay of his staff and the mystification of other White House aides, Anderson took a passive role as others forged ahead with the Reagan revolution for which Anderson himself had worked so long.

One vision of what the Office of Policy Development should have been is enunciated by John T. McClaughry, the OPD senior staff member in charge of agriculture policy who has just resigned to return to Vermont, reportedly to run against Republican Senator Robert Stafford. According to McClaughry, if the President was to have any hope of imposing his conservative philosophy on a recalcitrant government, he needed "people at the top who share his ideological vision. But there are not a lot of them around." The Cabinet is personally and politically loyal to Reagan, but is not ideologically motivated. "So," McClaughry says, "Reagan must have a staff that will impress on the government that the President means ideological business—that will push and guide and shape things so that his appointees have a learning experience and don't just manage the government along sound Republican lines.

"The OPD needs to be the policy monitor that determines the ground rules and the direction for everybody else in the Administration. It should be the think tank that takes the President's philosophy and devises practical applications in the context of the budget and the overall policy apparatus and makes it stick. This role, though, was consciously rejected for this office."

According to various aides, Anderson did not see the OPD as an activist operation "from which poured forth the golden gospel," but rather as "a checkpoint where, when tainted goods came to the President, they could be snatched out of line and disposed of." One of Anderson's subordinates said, "He didn't see his job as one of line authority, so he didn't mobilize the shop to police the ideals of the Administration. He used the staff, alternately, as research assistants to prepare him for senior staff meetings, and later, when Ed Meese set up the Cabinet councils, as paper passers for Cabinet officers. We framed position papers so that they could argue and recommend things to the President. We didn't argue or recommend ourselves."

Before he resigned recently to return to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Anderson had developed a reputation at the White House as someone who leaped forcefully into a few controversies about which he had strong feelings, such as draft registration (which he opposed, but failed to stop), identity cards for aliens (which he opposed successfully), expansion of private competition for the Post Office (which he promoted unsuccessfully), and free trade (on which he generally prevailed). Some aides give Anderson credit, or blame, for persuading the President not to raise taxes this year; others contend that his role has been overrated and that Reagan's decision was his own.

In general, one aide said, "you never knew when OPD was going to pop up its head. Marty could get his voice heard when he felt something strongly, but he was not systematic." Domestic power in the Reagan Administration has resided primarily in David Stockman's Office of Management and Budget, and secondarily in the Cabinet council system set up by Presidential counselor Meese. One White House aide said, "I remember having lunch with Stockman in December 1980. Dave told me, 'I've got six hundred people under me at OMB, and I'm going to run domestic policy in this Administration.' He hit the ground running and he's doing it. His guys are there. They know everything and our whole domestic policy except for a few little things has been budget-driven. The budget decides what our policy is instead of our policy determining the budget." By comparison to OMB's 620 staff members, OPD has just 38.

ANDERSON'S SUCCESSOR in Ehrlichman's old captain's cabin is Edwin L. Harper, who previously was Number 2 man to Stockman, but who also held (owing to previous White House experience and the backing of Edwin Meese) the bureaucratic rank of assistant to the President, highest in the White House. Like Anderson, Harper has a Ph.D. and worked on domestic policy in the Nixon White House. But Harper is a manager rather than an academic, and has the reputation of being an activist rather than a theorist. He is not, however, an ideologue, and for this reason some conservatives hoped that the OPD job would go to Edwin Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation. But Feulner was not interested in joining the government, so Meese has made him a consultant on policy, and talked Harper into taking over OPD.

Although Harper has been in the job only a month, he has reorganized OPD, and staff productivity and morale have markedly improved. Harper has split his domain into two parts: the Office of Policy Development, headed by yet another Ph.D. and Nixon-Ford veteran, Roger B. Porter; and the Office of Policy

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Information, headed by Anderson's former deputy, Edwin J. Gray, once Ronald Reagan's press secretary in California. Gray and a staff of five are responsible for condensing all Reagan domestic policy decisions into one-page summaries, so that officials throughout the government will know what policy is and, it is hoped, will speak with one voice. The rest of the staff, under Porter, serves two functions: as the secretariat for the Cabinet councils and as policy analysts for the President.

OPD appears to be more energetic at both these functions than it was under Anderson. Harper claims that "people don't give Marty full credit. For one thing, the policy agenda had been pretty well set when the Administration came to office, and Marty had been helping set it since 1976. Secondly, his style was to give things quiet nudges from behind the scenes, and if things were coming out in his direction, he didn't say anything." But other White House aides say that Harper assumes a much more aggressive role than Anderson did. He urges the OPD staff to "look at journals and articles that enable you to get a jump on where the problems are going to be. You don't want to rely on opinion polls to tell you what America's ten most urgent problems are. It's important that we have our homework done and have not only the President's past statements lined up, but the facts and the options that can be presented on the Hill."

Harper reportedly has been an active participant in President Reagan's weekly Monday issues lunches. Some senior aides were especially impressed with his analysis of the impact of current economic conditions on the airlines, thrift institutions, and other weak industries. And Harper's staff participates with the White House communications staff in Thursday afternoon meetings at which tactics are devised to disseminate Administration domestic initiatives. Out of these meetings have emerged a White House energy briefing for reporters and a proposal for weekly five-minute radio speeches by the President.

Despite what's called a "quantum leap" in OPD activism, however, the office is unlikely to be the cockpit it was under Ehrlichman or the think-tank taskmaster favored by conservative ideologues. Ehrlichman was domestic czar because Richard Nixon favored a hierarchical decision-making style, and didn't understand what a powerful OMB could do. At OPD, Harper probably won't be a czar because Reagan believes in Cabinet collegiality. But one day he might inherit OMB if its present boss, Stockman, moves on to other things.

MORTON KONDRACKE

The rise of a not-so-great communicator.

CHARLES Z. WICK, ENTREPRENEUR

BY TIMOTHY NOAH

CHARLES Z. WICK was widely quoted last summer as saying that Republican extravagance is a comfort, not an affront, to the poor. Wick is the director of the International Communications Agency, and he is also, by all accounts, Ronald Reagan's best friend in Washington. Having previously orchestrated the inaugural festivities, the ICA director seemed to think it wasn't necessary to keep a discreet silence about the champagne corks popping around him. On the contrary. Drawing upon his experience in the movie business, in which he had been a talent agent and producer, he theorized that a similar extravagance in the Hollywood films of the 1930s had kept up the hopes of the downtrodden throughout the Depression. "The general idea," Wick now explains, "was that the Hollywood movies during the Depression showed glamour, showed beautiful clothes, and showed that better things can happen as against the dreary Depression. There could be hope, and inspiration, and that kind of thing—just like why people read fairy tales." This was not, Wick insists, "a unique observation," by which he means an objectionable one, but rather "a restatement as to what was extant in those times. And it got translated into something like, 'Let 'em eat cake,' I guess."

Meet the man Ronald Reagan has put in charge of communication. Aside from his difficulty in distinguishing actors (against whom Depression audiences bore no grudge) from politicians (with whom the public tends to associate its troubles), Wick has a hard time making himself understood. He began a meeting with the National Council of Community World Affairs Organizations last fall by announcing dramatically, "We are at war." Later, he explained: "I meant that we are in a war of ideas with the Soviet Union." More recently, Wick boasted that "Let Poland Be Po-

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land," an ICA-produced television program, would be "probably the biggest show in the history of the world." He later took pains to deny that it was "some song-and-dance" show (though Frank Sinatra was on hand to sing "Ever Homeward" in Polish). "It is a very serious articulation of the background of freedom," Wick told the *Washington Post*. "To remain passive is a bummer."

LUCKILY FOR WICK, ICA directors tend to spend most of their time out of the public eye. By law, ICA's productions—Voice of America broadcasts, glossy and serious magazines, TV shows like "Let Poland Be Poland"—cannot be seen or heard here. (A special resolution had to be passed by both Houses of Congress to allow PBS to broadcast "Let Poland Be Poland" domestically, under a grant from the Heritage Foundation.) So, looking at it cynically, the job is ideal for someone like Wick, who has demonstrated loyalty to the President, but who exhibits no skills that might be useful in government. (Wick was a vigorous fund-raiser, commended by one campaign aide for his ability "to beat prospective contributors to a pulp on Reagan's behalf.") Wick has been praised as a resourceful entrepreneur and a self-made man. But his real role in the private sector has tended to be that of a middleman. Wick has been a music arranger, talent agent, and venture capitalist, but never a composer, performer, or industrialist. His career as an investor has made him rich, but it hasn't prepared him to run an agency that ought to put a premium on creativity, idealism, and political sophistication.

Wick and his wife were described by *People* magazine last year as "typical of Reagan intimates—self-made successes who are unapologetic about their wealth." That's partly true. Wick is indeed typical of members of Reagan's kitchen cabinet, and these men are indeed unapologetic about their wealth. But several members of the group, Wick included, diverge from the Horatio Alger model of the self-made millionaire. That is, they didn't start out poor. Like Alfred Bloomingdale, Jack Wrather (Texas oil), and Justin Dart (lucrative first marriage), Wick started out well off, and became more so. Wick's father was a successful Cleveland businessman—like his son, a venture capitalist. His investments, recalls Wick, were "mostly in heavy industry." Wick attended public schools in Cleveland, studied music at the University of Michigan, and took a law degree at Case Western Reserve in 1943. Then he moved to California.

Business was booming in California during the 1940s, and Wick turned himself into a wealthy man. But times had changed since his father's day; Wick concentrated his attention not on factories but on real estate and the entertainment industry. (Wick says he's never been involved in manufacturing: "I had an interest in a couple of manufacturing companies, but I wasn't active.") He wrote musical arrangements for Tommy Dorsey, then joined up with William Morris (the talent agency, not the Socialist), where he worked in the radio department. Sam Weisbord, president of William Morris, remembers Wick as "a very likable man. There was nothing in him that threatened anybody."

Wick spent the early 1950s in New York and London, working as an agent and lawyer, investing in real estate and commodities here and abroad, and founding London's Twickenham studios, the only real "factory" this entrepreneur ever called his own. One of Wick's clients in New York was a big-band singer named Frances Langford, through whom he met a man named Ralph Evinrude, an outboard motor manufacturer. In 1955, Evinrude, then vice chairman of the Outboard Marine Corporation, married Frances Langford, and entered into a partnership with Charles Wick. Wick and Evinrude produced two television specials titled "Frances Langford Presents," sponsored by Rexall Drugs, whose chairman, Justin Dart, became a friend of Wick's. Wick and Evinrude also co-produced a film, *Snow White and the Three Stooges. Snow White* was written by Wick, who had intended it to be a rather ambitious home movie. "I wrote the story originally for my kids," Wick recalls, "who were crazy about the Stooges. I was going to do a film with them privately. And, like one of those Hollywood things you read about, Twentieth Century-Fox got very interested and wanted to do it there. . . . Instead of the $400,000 that I was going to spend on the picture, done independently, it grew to about $4 million. It was quite a spectacle." Although press reports about Wick routinely mention the film, Wick's official ICA biography prefers to note that Wick "handled negotiations for the American film rights to Sir Winston Churchill's *History of the English Speaking Peoples.*"

THERE IS NOTHING disgraceful about the way Wick invested his money. But there's nothing particularly productive about these enterprises, either. Yet Wick has seized the myth of the entrepreneur-hero with a vengeance. "The government doesn't produce anything," Wick says. (Neither do lawyers, talent agents, or real estate investors; and producers, despite the name, are really part of the service sector.) "The government doesn't create goods, the government doesn't create money, the government doesn't create taxes. It's the enlightened businessman that takes the

COMING:
Stephen Chapman on the Law of the Sea.

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risks and makes it possible for good people, willing employees, craftsman, and others to be organized under a management science. And in a pluralistic society it takes an array of various disciplines to produce the outcome of success in our economic enterprises."

How does this vision apply to a venture like United Convalescent Hospitals, a nursing home chain Wick and Evinrude founded in the early 1960s after Wick had moved back to California? "I saw that there was a great need to be filled," Wick says. Evinrude, now retired in Florida, sees it differently. "At that time, the government wanted to promote the whole nursing home field," Evinrude says. "Legislation was passed that would guarantee a bank loan up to 90 percent if the nursing home were approved by the government." When United Convalescent was bought out in 1971 by Hillhaven, Inc. (where Wick was briefly chairman of the board), over half its revenue came from Medicare and Medicaid, and it was still losing money. Among the "needs" that had gone unfilled were adequate food budgets, cleaning, nursing service, accounting, and cost control, all of which were upgraded by Hillhaven after the merger.

WICK DIVESTED himself of his major investments in 1978. "I just wanted to get more liquid," Wick says. Was he thinking of politics? No, Wick says, he was just "taking it easier." But "as the father of five children," Wick soon became interested in "where the country was going." Though he and Ronald Reagan had never had a professional relationship, they were old friends; their children had gone to school together, their wives were close friends, and their families got together for Christmas dinner every year. In May 1979, Wick, a political novice, found himself in charge of the "ground floor committee" for Ronald Reagan. "My wife and I invited a number of our friends to a cocktail party, telling them they would be getting in on the ground floor with our candidate," Wick explains. There followed a "10 Club"—anybody who raised $10,000 became a member and was invited to a couple of pre-announcement barbecues at the Reagan ranch. Then the announcement dinner in New York, other fundraising efforts, and, finally, the Inauguration, where Wick sought to convey precisely the fairy-tale glamour, hope, and inspiration that sustained movie audiences throughout the Depression. To spread this happiness across the land, Wick added a personal touch: a closed-circuit television feed to regional celebrations all across the country. "They danced to the same orchestras we did in eighty-five cities around the country," Wick recalls with satisfaction.

Wick had a similar scheme in mind for the abortive Coalition for a New Beginning, a group he chaired, which was to promote the Administration's budget cuts to the public. The President was to make a closed-circuit presentation to his friends across the country, asking them for contributions toward a more ambitious public relations effort aimed at the doubters of Reaganomics. The group was quickly disbanded, partly because the White House was concerned the group might run afoul of tax and lobbying regulations, partly because corporate solicitations by Justin Dart (and, some said, Wick) were too ham-handed, and partly because Wick had just been named head of ICA.

THE INTERNATIONAL Communications Agency, which is now in the process of being renamed the United States Information Agency, as it was called until 1978, has a permanent identity crisis: is it an objective news agency, or is it an arm of the State Department? The past participation of such well-known journalists as Edward R. Murrow, Carl Rowan, and John Chancellor suggests the former; the presence of temporarily assigned foreign service officers to review policy decisions suggests the latter. But when the agency is run with vigor by people burning with a message to convey to the rest of the world—as was ICA's most important arm, the Voice of America, when it was founded shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor—it really doesn't matter whether its employees think of themselves as journalists or diplomats.

Writing in the Spring 1981 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Kenneth Adelman, now Jeane Kirkpatrick's deputy at the United Nations, heaved a sigh for those bygone days and posited a brighter future:

> VOA can send better messages. To be more effective, it should elevate the sophistication of its broadcasts. The quality of VOA roughly equals that of most Western commercial stations. But VOA's target population—the Soviet intelligentsia, young managers, scientists, and cultural and political leaders—is of a markedly higher caliber than the average Western radio audience.

There's more than a dash of Council on Foreign Relations snobbery here in the emphasis on intellectuals and "cultural and political leaders." But the need for a sharp VOA doesn't arise solely from the sophistication of the totalitarian elite. Anyone who has seen Lech Walesa on television can observe that political debate among workers in Poland is more sophisticated than it is here. VOA's audience is ready for—indeed demands—political sensitivity, seriousness, and complexity.

Wick rose to this challenge by appointing an old friend from the record business and a former member of the King Family singers as director of VOA. Soon after his appointment, James Conkling confessed in the Voice newsletter, "I've got to learn the news end of the business." Sadly, he never did. When he finally resigned on March 22, the only accomplishment he could boast about was getting the President to attend VOA's fortieth anniversary celebration. "He was awfully annoyed," recalls one VOA staffer, "when people didn't applaud him for that." Conkling's proposed replacement, John Hughes, seems to inspire more confidence at the Voice. Those at the Voice who consider

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themselves journalists draw comfort from the fact that he is a newsman: Hughes was a Pulitzer Prize-winning Southeast Asian correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, and then rose to become managing editor. Past and present colleagues find him competent and fair-minded, if not necessarily inspiring.

Indecision is ultimately what did Conkling in. When he arrived at VOA, Conkling was hailed, like Wick, as a zesty entrepreneur. And like Wick, he was really a middleman—an executive of Warner Brothers records. Conkling appointed a man named Philip Nicolaides to be a commentator for VOA. Nicolaides caused a stir after he urged in a memo to Conkling that VOA serve a "propaganda" rather than a disinterested news role. The memo was leaked to the *Washington Post* and the obligatory press conference was called, but all Conkling had to say about the issue was that the memo was "stolen from my office." Faced with a controversy that Conkling refused to resolve, Wick did what any efficient manager would do: he confined Nicolaides to a remote ICA office without a secretary, and waited for him to resign. (Nicolaides says he was even instructed to stay away from meetings on Project Truth, the Soviet disinformation monitoring effort to which he was nominally reassigned.) Nicolaides finally obliged a few days before Conkling's resignation.

THE NICOLAIDES memo can hardly be said to have lacked vigor. But the crude manner in which Nicolaides described his task at VOA betrayed a depressing public relations outlook that recalls Wick's own William Morris background. (Nicolaides is a former public relations man, though more recently he has been a radio commentator and a writer for the conservative tabloid *Human Events*.) "Public diplomacy," wrote Nicolaides, is

> a bland, sanitized substitute for *propaganda*, a word that ha[s] fallen into disrepute because some of its most gifted practitioners [have] put it in the service of odious ideologies. But the fact is that propaganda has more in common with advertising and public relations than with 'diplomacy.' Advertising and public relations involve the persuasion of large numbers of people—chiefly through mass media. One of the first great American copywriters defined advertising as 'selling in print.' Today, of course, he would include the broadcast media.

The problem with this dreary view of VOA, as with Wick's ICA in general, is that it is derived from "great American copywriters" rather than great American idealists. People, Nicolaides insisted, "buy the sizzle, not the steak." Shouldn't the quality of the steak be its selling point? Nicolaides's indifference to America's inherent worth borders on the unpatriotic. And it echoes the cynicism of Soviet propaganda, which presumably has nothing but "sizzle" to sell. To be sure, Nicolaides's complaints about timidity at the Voice are often valid. For instance, he rightly denounced the "spiking" of an Alexander Solzhenitsyn reading at the behest of the State Department. And it is absurd that he was forbidden to refer to "tanks and bayonets" in a VOA commentary he prepared on Poland. But Nicolaides's objections just as often have a niggling, empty quality. His superiors would not permit him to call Polish soldiers a "red gestapo," he complained. Does that really detract from the substance of his argument? Or does it merely deny the argument a little flash? These are questions Wick ought continually to struggle with. But to a man who chose to answer Polish repression with "the biggest show in the history of the world," distinctions between argument and manipulation must seem blurry.

"Let Poland Be Poland" has been Wick's most ambitious project in his first year at ICA—and his biggest fiasco. It was openly ridiculed by the press both at home and abroad, from one end of the political spectrum to the other. (See "Let Poland Be Hollywood," by Abraham Brumberg, TNR, February 17.) As one former Voice staffer observed, not one item of information was passed along that would have been news to anyone who has gleaned the newspaper headlines since December 13. Some of the platitudes were merely clichés; for instance, Charlton Heston's observation, "People who love freedom speak in many tongues but one voice." Others were vaguely subversive of the whole enterprise—such as Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who remarked, "The Polish people should be left free to settle their own problems in their own way," or West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's observation, "The Polish people must itself find its path into the future." Had the project been assembled by someone truly committed to the Polish struggle for freedom, the show might have delved into history, or fiery politics, as Andrzej Wajda's film *Man of Iron* does. But the man Wick chose was Martin Pasetta, whose earlier political experience extends only to televising the Inauguration. (He also directs the Academy Awards.) Pasetta is disarmingly honest about his qualifications. As he told the *New York Times*, he was "trained to use the tools of television, that's all."

WICK HIMSELF can't boast any better qualifications. His private career betrays a lack of commitment to the very ideal he's supposed to promote—liberty. To Wick, liberty means the freedom to invest in safe enterprises. So it's no great surprise that Wick's ICA reflects the values not of a true entrepreneur, but of a vaguely cynical speculator. To the man in the middle, the steak's sizzle guarantees a quick profit. But ultimately, the steak must be more than sizzling; it must be nourishing. If Charles Wick had spent more of his career in the stockyards, and less of it in the trading houses, he might have learned this, and might have become a great communicator. Then again, maybe he would have been too absorbed in the creative challenges of the private sector to bother with a government career at all.

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Ideological haute couture.

THE CONVERSION OF SUSAN SONTAG

BY RICHARD GRENIER

IT IS A forgetful society that considers a recantation by Susan Sontag a major event. After all, hasn't Sontag based her whole career on contrariness? Didn't she write that "perversity is the muse of modern literature"? That the modernist writer should provide "rare emotions and dangerous sensations" with an acceptable concomitant of "unintelligibility, obsessiveness, painful truths, lies. . ."? And isn't she a modernist? There is a question if a recantation by Susan Sontag is really a recantation at all, rather than another one of her dazzling modernist leaps into incoherence. Onward! she has cried, "further and further"! Never go "back to origins"! It is therefore puzzling to learn that her latest leap has led her back to the conclusion that Communism is really a very wicked system.

All these years, she says in her now-famous Town Hall speech, she has persistently failed to understand the "nature of the Communist tyranny." And yet (speaking of "back to origins") she wrote in 1963 that Albert Camus had "acquitted himself admirably" when he rejected the French Communist Party in the late 1940s. "As a moral judgment, Camus's decision was right then," she said, "and since the death of Stalin he has been vindicated many times over in a political sense as well." Even in *Trip to Hanoi*, she wrote that "it's second nature for me to suspect the government of a Communist country of being oppressive and rigid, if not worse. . . ." Can it be that Sontag has been leaping about in her avant-garde way so brilliantly and so unintelligibly that when she comes to a place she's been before she no longer recognizes it? Even when she's been there several times?

As long as Sontag is in a mood for self-reappraisal, there's a lot out on her table for her to reappraise if she has a mind to. After she said, most famously, that "[t]he white race *is* the cancer of human history. . . ," she wrote a whole book (*Illness as Metaphor*) tangential to the question, without any conspicuous admission of error. But there is more where that came from. In an article called "Some Thoughts on the Right Way (For Us) To Love the Cuban Revolution," which she published in *Ramparts* as late as 1969, she wrote: "To us, it is self-evident that the *Reader's Digest* and Lawrence Welk and Hilton Hotels are organically connected with the Special Forces' napalming villages in Guatemala. . . ." She wrote that our culture and hers was "inorganic, dead, coercive, authoritarian," full of "dehumanized individuals," living dead, and "heartless bureaucrats of death and empty affluence." In such a society, she wrote, it was imperative to "retreat from the rough, dehumanizing embrace of the corporate life-killers (family, schools, jobs, the Army). . . ." She has also written that America was built up according to a "tawdry fantasy of the good life"; that "the quality of American life is an insult to the possibilities of human growth"; that ours is a "passionately racist country" which "will continue to be so in the foreseeable future" (written years after the Johnson Administration civil rights acts); that our dynamism "is the energy of violence . . . naked violence," part of a "full-grown, firmly installed national psychosis." It's all "really intolerable." She has written: "I'm scarcely more hopeful for America than I am for the Jews. This is a doomed country, it seems to me; I only pray that, when America founders, it doesn't drag the rest of the planet down, too." So that's you and me now, black and white, male and female, Jew and gentile—it doesn't matter.

But what about the rest of the planet? What has Sontag said of that? Well, there's Cuba. "The Cubans know a lot about spontaneity, gaiety, sensuality, and freaking out," she wrote, ten years after Castro had come to power. "They are not linear, dessicated creatures of print-culture. . . . The increase of energy comes because they have found a new focus for it: the community." Freaking out cuts no cane, even in Cuba; still, there is much more in this vein, with Cubans, high on community, "talking and working several nights a week." But Sontag really hit her stride in wartime Hanoi. After a two-week visit, on the basis of her "direct experience," she declared that North Vietnam was not only an "ethical society," but "a society tremendously overextended ethically." She wrote: "Incorporation into such a society [would] greatly improve the lives of most people in the world," even though "the North Vietnamese aren't good enough haters." Of the POWs we now know for certain were being abused and tortured, she wrote: "The North Vietnamese genuinely care about the welfare of the

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hundreds of captured American pilots and give them bigger rations than the Vietnamese population gets. . . . People in North Vietnam really do believe in the goodness of man. . . . " Such was "the moral beauty of the Vietnamese" that for them the Communist Party, despite Sontag's own initial dark suspicions, "simply means the effective leadership of the country . . . a vast corps of skilled, ethically impeccable, mostly underpaid public servants, tutoring and working alongside people in all their activities, sharing their hardships. . . ." In her apotheosis, she stirringly affirmed what she "actually saw" in the two weeks she was there: "that the North Vietnamese genuinely love and admire their leaders; and, even more inconceivable to us, that the government loves the people."

In her contribution to *Viva Che,* published in 1968, Sontag appealed to all good revolutionaries to cleave not only to the sainted dead (Rosa Luxemburg, Patrice Lumumba, and Che), but also to the sainted living ("Fidel," "Stokely," and H. Rap Brown). In one stunning sentence, she managed to condemn Stalin (for "betraying" the Russian Revolution), his successors (for "brutal repressions" in East Germany in 1953 and Hungary in 1956), and the French and Italian Communist parties (for "counterrevolutionary policies" in 1945 to 1947, when there were "potential revolutionary situations" in Western Europe, which, if successfully exploited, would have brought Soviet tanks to the Atlantic). She even condemned Stalin, again, for repressing the "democratic revolutionary uprising" in Poland in 1944—which, heartless though Stalin may have been in not giving assistance, he did not in fact do; the Germans did it. In this same magnificent sentence, Sontag placed some Western Communist parties' insufficient zeal for revolution on the same footing as Moscow's excessive zeal of repression as joint perpetrators of the "traumatic betrayal of the Russian revolution."

NONE OF THIS is to suggest that before this February's conversion Sontag had never given a backward glance to any of her various fervors. In a newspaper interview in November 1980, she said she had become aware of the "perils of overgeneralizing the esthetic view of the world." "When I was in Cuba and North Vietnam," she went on, "it was not clear to me then that they would become Soviet satellites, but history has been very cruel and the options available to these countries were fewer than we had hoped." This is a very odd statement, since it implies that when she visited Cuba and North Vietnam in 1968, the two countries were still free agents, uncommitted—whereas any observer in 1980 must realize that Cuba and North Vietnam were already Soviet satellites, and that Sontag, caught up in one of her rapturous states, had simply not noticed. There is also the odd emphasis on the cruelty of history, as if a high-minded, idealistic person like Sontag should perhaps not be held responsible when history is cruel.

But let us set the stage for the big conversion. The crucial event seems to have been less a coup in Warsaw than a sojourn (by Sontag) in Paris, the home of true civilization. For even though Sontag is widely considered a home-grown American intellectual, she in fact represents a survival of our condition as a colonial culture. While her feeling toward the United States has rarely risen above loathing, her consistent attitude toward the tastes and prejudices of the continental avant-garde has been, in a word, servile. A statistic: in her first collection of essays, *Against Interpretation*, the personal studies, grouped by country, are France, 11; Germany, 2; Italy, 1; Hungary, 1; the United States, 2. The Americans were Jack Smith ("this type of art has yet to be understood in this country") and Norman O. Brown ("Serious thinking about these problems . . . has been continuous in France since. . ."). Even her *Trip to Hanoi* had to be validated on the last page by an account of a visit to Paris during which she compared her feelings to those of French acquaintances who had been "on the barricades" during the turbulent month of May 1968. At the moment, as it happens, the French intellectual class is in an unprecedented rage against the Soviet Union. There are several contributing factors, but the main one is Poland—with which France has had a "special relationship" for centuries. For the French, Solidarity has been a passion play. If Sontag was unaware of this before her recent trip, she was quickly set straight. And she returned to America transfigured by an incandescent new notion: anti-Communism was in. Or, for her, perhaps, in again.

Then came Conversion Week, during which Sontag made two public appearances in New York, on Monday, February 1, at a PEN "Conversation" at the Public Theatre, and on the following Saturday at a rally at Town Hall held by "American Workers & Artists for Solidarity." Now it is theoretically possible that I have been doing Sontag an enormous injustice, that she resisted the new anti-Communist fever in Paris, and that she had a vision of Lech Walesa with the stigmata some time between Monday and Saturday. But we might reasonably expect that even Sontag had held the opinions she sprang on the Town Hall crowd on Saturday for at least a week—which leaves us with the problem of squaring what she said on Monday with the rousing anti-Communist sentiments she expressed on Saturday.

Because Monday night, too, was an anti-Communist event. The distinguished young Polish poet, Stanislaw Baranczak, shared the stage at the Public Theatre with Soviet exile Joseph Brodsky and American critic Susan Sontag for a discussion of poetry under Communism. Brodsky and Baranczak knew the Soviet system from the inside, bore the marks of it on their hides. Brodsky had served time in a Soviet prison. Baranczak had been on what he thought was a temporary stay in the U.S. at the time of the Jaruzelski coup. During the evening he

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was to hear Brodsky tell of another Pole in the same circumstances who had received a telephone call from Czeslaw Milosz, who said grimly: "Welcome to thirty years of exile." Baranczak and Brodsky are real anti-Communists. They have been mauled by the Great Beast, and you will have a hard time persuading them that dismissal of the PATCO strikers has anything in common with the declaration of a state of war in Poland (within days Brodsky was to call such a comparison "obscene").

A generally reliable indicator of a person's basic feelings toward Communism is how he behaves when he encounters, not a demagogue, not a charlatan, not a "superpatriot," but a sincere, even ardent, anti-Communist. If the reaction is one of aversion, watch out. Throughout the entire PEN poetry evening, Susan Sontag's demeanor toward Baranczak and Brodsky was unremittingly hostile: arrogant, abrasive, patronizing, contemptuous. Claiming to have read Baranczak's poetry in translation, she called him "Stefan" twice, although the more familiar form of his first name is "Stanislas," of which the diminutive is "Stash." Near the start of the discussion, apropos of nothing in particular, she indignantly declared that she had been coming under attack for some "errors of perception" she had made regarding certain Communist countries, but that these errors of perception had been produced by a "nostalgia for an old-fashioned regime"—one that values "the artist." She added that she had never made such errors about the Soviet Union, which was "too old-fashioned." Beyond the tone of instant self-exoneration, a hallmark of the Sontag style, there was a bizarre call for admiration, as if "errors of perception" which proceeded from such a noble sentiment might even be commendable. The question of which Communist regimes are just old-fashioned enough to merit nostalgia, and which are *too* old-fashioned, is best left to political antique appraisers such as Sontag. But whether or not Communism is old-fashioned, the value it accords artists can be seen by the unlovely choice it gives them: serve the state or be liquidated. In any case, we have here another example of Miss Sontag's mercurial nature. In five days she would be admitting she had been blind to Soviet evils, but tonight she was asserting she had never been blind to them. In five days she would be reproving herself for not having listened to "émigrés from Communist countries," but here she was tonight not listening to them.

DRAWING BY DONALD GATES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The wrangling went on. Sontag cleared the decks by declaring that if for the moment the United States was not under martial law like Jaruzelski's Poland, it "could happen!" As for those who believed there was censorship in Communist countries but no censorship in the U.S.—here she made "easy, boy" gestures—that was "debatable." But, as it was a poetical evening, the three locked horns mostly on metaphysical poetry—in which there is much interest these days among independent-minded literary people in Poland and the Soviet Union. Baranczak and Brodsky stated quite firmly that there was something about the nature of a "totalitarian" society that gave writers there a peculiar receptivity, even a craving, for metaphysical verse. No, no, no, said Sontag. They had it all wrong. There was such a thing as the "history of taste." The vogue for the metaphysical poets started in the English-speaking countries in the 1940s (actually T. S. Eliot's essay on the subject

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appeared in 1921), so it was natural for the style to be reaching the boondocks about now. But Baranczak and Brodsky wouldn't lie down. The temperature rose. The two exiles seemed to be insisting that there was something about totalitarian society that Sontag didn't get. Though I was sitting in the first row, there might have been some words I missed, what with the slavic accents and the tension; because I suddenly saw Sontag stiffen in indignation. "We understand tyranny!" she said loudly. "We read!"

This from the woman who half an hour before had been admitting her "errors of perception" on Communist countries. Not only could she read about tyranny and not understand. She could go there and have a good look and not know it when she saw it. Moreover, five days later she would be glorying in how she had so wrongly remained "unconvinced" by Milosz's *The Captive Mind*, but tonight she was in a different mood. For ten solid minutes there, it seemed to her that she understood, and had always understood, everything.

THE CROWD on Saturday night at Town Hall was different. Attracted by an array of names running from Pete Seeger to Paul Robeson Jr., for "An Evening For Solidarity," it booed Sontag roundly when she spoke ill of the *Nation*. It goes without saying that there was no one on the stage who was pro-Soviet. (Some were given to such statements as, "I yield to no one in my anti-Sovietism!") Yet there must be something subliminal in either the *Nation* or the names, because when they support an event (the Nation Institute cosponsored the town hall meeting and the magazine carried the ad) they tend to draw a crowd that doesn't like to hear too many bad things about Communism. Sontag opened with some comforting lines about the "utter hypocrisy" of the Reagan Administration's support for Solidarity: "Reagan the union-buster! Reagan the puppet master of the butchers in El Salvador!" The leaders of "capitalist Europe and North America" bore "great responsibility" for the events in Poland! (Other speakers, too, gave the impression that the Jaruzelski coup was a kind of joint capitalist-Soviet operation.) Then Sontag got down to business.

Communism had failed. "It has been a hard lesson to learn," she said, "and I am struck by how long it has taken us to learn it. I say 'we,' and of course I include myself." She told of reading *The Captive Mind* in 1953, and regarding it "as an instrument of cold-war propaganda. . . . That is, I read the book and was utterly unconvinced by it." But when she went to Poland in 1980, she found that Milosz "had, if anything, underestimated the horrors of the Communist regime installed by force in his country. . . . Why did we not have a place for, why did we not have ears for, their truth?"

"We were so sure who our enemies were," Sontag said, "who the virtuous were, who the benighted were. I'm struck by the fact that with our moral certitude, our hopes for peace and for reforms of our own system, we simply were not responding to the truth. And we were countenancing a great deal of untruth. I will put it even more strongly. Imagine, if you will, someone who read only the *Reader's Digest* between 1950 and 1970, and someone in the same period who read only the *Nation* or the *New Statesman*. Which reader would have been better informed about the realities of Communism? The answer, I think, should give us pause. Can it be that our enemies were right?"

This went over poorly. "We thought we loved justice," said Sontag. "Many of us did. But we did not love the truth enough. . . . The result was that many of us—again I include myself—did not understand the nature of Communist tyranny. . . . We thought of Stalinist tyranny as if it were an aberration, and we praised other regimes, other regimes outside Europe in particular, which had essentially the same character."

Then Sontag had a deep thought: "I would contend that what the recent Polish events illustrate is a truth that we should have understood a long time ago: that Communism *is* fascism—successful fascism, if you will. What we have called fascism is rather the form of tyranny that can be overthrown and that has largely failed. Not only is fascism and overt military rule probably the destiny, the future of all Communist countries—especially when their populations are moved to revolt—but Communism is in itself a variant, the most successful variant of fascism. Fascism with a human face."

The *Soho News* ran the speech, minus two paragraphs, transcribed from a tape. Sontag was much exercised, and sued the weekly for $50,000 for publishing it without her permission. She then gave the text to the *Nation*—but doctored it. She was polite. She cut the passage about a reader of the *Nation* being ill-informed

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about the realities of Communism. But she was also tricky. The *Nation* ran comments on the speech, mostly from *Nation* regulars, which prompted Sontag to further thoughts, such as that she'd "hardly thought Milosz was lying" when she read *The Captive Mind*. The trouble was that this seemed to go against what she'd said at Town Hall, so she went back to the original text and took out the line about the book leaving her "utterly unconvinced." And she added a line, too. The book had "troubled" her. So Sontag moved even during the week *following* Conversion Week. On Conversion Saturday the book had left her "utterly unconvinced," and not troubled. But a week later the book had "troubled" her, and that utterly unconvinced feeling was gone. (By the time another two weeks had passed, Sontag was bending time itself. She told the *Washington Post* she had made most of her favorable statements about Cuba and North Vietnam in the "Khrushchev era." Yet her Hanoi book and her Cuba article were both written in 1968—the year Brezhnev invaded Czechoslovakia. Khruschev fell in 1964.)

IN HER COMMENTS for the *Nation*, Sontag had some brand new ideas, as well, about the sinister destiny of Communist Europe. For if the oppressed do rise against their tyrannical masters, she warned us, "it will not, I fear, be to embrace an alternative to our liking. What is brewing in Eastern Europe is not democratic socialism. The centrality of a particularly fervent Catholicism to Solidarity is not an accident or an instance of cultural lag; and, in Russia, . . . new converts to religious fundamentalism outnumber the liberals and democratic socialists a thousand to one." The menace of religious mania darkens the Eastern sky. Poland and Russia taken over by a bunch of slavic Jerry Falwells. I never thought Sontag liked all those crucifixes at Gdansk. In closing, Sontag expressed her "passionate support" for the rebels of El Salvador in their "struggle to overthrow the tyranny backed by the American government. . . ."

So what else is new? *Trip to Hanoi*'s first sentence had Sontag "passionately" opposed to the United States in Vietnam. Now she "passionately" supports the guerrillas in El Salvador—no half-way, no negotiations, no alternatives, "passionately." And it could be anywhere. Somehow she'll always passionately support the other guys, and passionately oppose us. We'll always be bad and they'll always be good. If things go wrong, she'll always say she didn't realize how few options they had and history is cruel. Her attacks of anti-Communism are plainly cyclical, connected, possibly, to the phase of the moon in Paris, although, who knows, the periodicity might only be thirty minutes.

Sontag's political illiteracy remains unblemished. "With a human face" was an expression coined by Czechoslovakia's Alexander Dubcek during the Prague Spring of 1968 for his country's "Socialism with a human face." It means humane, liberal. To call Communism "fascism with a human face" is to call it an attractive, appealing, humane form of fascism. In any event, Communism cannot be a "variant of fascism." Leninism is the ancestral form for all totalitarian systems. But fascism, although it patterned most of its techniques on the Communist model, is a particularist creed glorifying the state and nation. The goal of Nazi Germany was to establish the mastery of the "Aryan race." Whatever their sins, this is not the goal of either Leonid Brezhnev or Wojciech Jaruzelski. They are Communists; the defining goal of their system is universalist, salvationist, chiliastic—which is why it exercises this fluctuating magnetic attraction on Sontag. Moreover, alas, no totalitarian state, fascist or Communist, has to date ever been "overthrown"—meaning from within, which is the point. Hitler and Mussolini were defeated in war, which is something else. Sontag, in contiguous sentences, asserts that fascism is probably "the future of all Communist countries," and that it is also "the form of tyranny that can be overthrown." If so, we're almost out of the woods, aren't we? The Soviet Union will become Nazi Germany and then promptly overthrow itself. Or, like the last time, will *we* have to do the overthrowing? A less pleasant prospect, that.

Susan Sontag's grasp on reality is weak.

I will be plain. She came into prominence when our society as a whole, enjoying affluence unprecedented in history, had itself a weakened grip on reality, had lost its sense of what William James called life's "bitter tastes." That time may be passing. The word "socialism" produces in Sontag strange ecstasies of a religious nature. She also suffers from the recurring delusion that life is art. There is a country called the Soviet Union that has nuclear missiles targeted on us. This is not an aesthetic problem. Antonin Artaud cannot help us. Reasonable men and women may differ as to the proper course to take, but if we play our cards wrong, it will not be enough to say that history is cruel. If I could catch Miss Sontag during one of her attacks of anti-Communism, I would like to ask her: who is more evil then, they or we? Are we worth saving? If so, should not we defend ourselves? There must be some circumstances where the use of force is legitimate—what are they? I suspect she would find this line of questioning uncongenial, soulless. Artaud was obsessed with cruelty, went mad, died. Very theatrical. But we don't want to die, and there are others who do not want us to die either. We may be yahoos, but we are the West's last best hope. Check it out with your French friends, Miss Sontag: if we go down, it is the end—not only of Lawrence Welk and the Hilton Hotels, but of all that exhilarating leaping about, of "camp," and even of the Brasserie Lipp. Sontag thinks we are all in a movie by Jean-Luc Godard and that when this wonderful, cruel, ontological film is over and the lights come up, she will put on her coat and go home. But there will be no home. And there will be no coat.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Quiet and Strong, Loud and Weak

A Week's Vacation
(Biograph International)

Wrong Is Right
(Columbia Pictures)

Bertrand Tavernier has a sense of lineage. *A Week's Vacation*, his new film, is set in his native city of Lyons. It's about a schoolteacher, Nathalie Baye, who withdraws from work for a week because of difficulties with her students and who, among other things she does in that week, goes to the country to visit her parents. Her beloved father, now ill and immobile, is played by Jean Dasté, who was the young schoolteacher in Vigo's *Zeró de Conduite* (1933), the frisky youth who wins the boys' confidence.

At one point in the week Baye has dinner with a local innkeeper who is the father of one of her students: another guest is the title character of Tavernier's film *The Clockmaker* (made five years earlier), played by the same actor, Philippe Noiret, whose son and son's girl friend have now been in prison five years. Noiret is raising their child.

And Tavernier dedicates his new film to Jean Aurenche, now 77, who collaborated with him on the scripts of several films and has been writing films since 1936.

Busy though he was with affectionate remembrance, Tavernier has not neglected to make a good film, which reestablishes him on the American scene. He's had a peculiar career here. His first two films, *The Clockmaker* (TNR, September 4, 1976) and *Let Joy Reign Supreme* (TNR, September 17, 1977) were gems. His next has not yet been shown here. His fourth, *Spoiled Children*, was shown briefly in a special series and was, I thought, a dud. His fifth, a sci-fi film with Harvey Keitel, has not been shown here. I was sadly prepared to write him off as another Alain Tanner, a director who started strong and who quickly ran down into polished vacuities, when along comes, with pleasant surprise, this small, quiet, firm film. (A seventh Tavernier film is already playing in France.)

Tavernier's script, written with his wife, Colo Tavernier, and with Marie-Françoise Hans, tackles a difficult subject—difficult both because it's hard to dramatize and because many have tried. A cloud of futility and pointlessness afflicts the 31-year-old woman who has loved the work of teaching and who, in her private life, has a pretty happy time with a young man. The immediate straw is the recurrence of discipline problems with her early teenage students, a conviction of inutility because she has to spend so much of her class time *not* teaching. (Not exactly news to grade school and high school teachers everywhere.) She's on the edge of physical collapse when her doctor orders her to take a week off.

No magic reaffirmation occurs. The week itself, plus the visit to her parents; plus the support of her lover, plus a friendship with the innkeeper (the man develops a crush on her that embarrasses him); plus some time with a troubled student; these restore her strength and give her some belief that she is, to a degree at least, needed. Nothing is cured. If the film has a lesson, a term for which I apologize, it's not that a sane person can get rid of doubt, it's that doubt is now a condition of ongoing life—especially for people whose work consists of affecting other people. Midnight weariness is no more *the* condition of life than is morning vigor. Baye is (I'd say) reconciled: to the fact that perception of doubt is now a concomitant to the possibility of action; that, when one understands this, one can function. A kind of peace comes with that perception. The last line of Camus's essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" is: "One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

What holds this film together are the characterizations and Tavernier's skill and authenticity. The people are not startlingly original or profoundly drawn; they are completely credible, therefore interesting. Baye, who has been seen here mostly in Truffaut films, is addicted to smiling—someone apparently did her the disservice early in her career of commenting on her winning smile—but, in between smiles, she summons up the being of the teacher. Her lover is warmly done by Gerard Lanvin, and in the small pivotal role of the innkeeper, Michel Galabru gives a taking performance. Galabru has been, as I've seen him, a fair to foul *farceur*, in the *Cage aux Folles* films and elsewhere. I can't remember him in anything serious and I don't know whether Tavernier is responsible for his "conversion"; anyway, their collaboration here results in a human portrait.

I could have done without a few of the mood touches: when Baye is depressed, an old man shuffles by, so weak that he drops his cane; an old woman sits in the same chair in the room across the way every day, until

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Mephisto. A leading German actor (based on a real-life figure) changes politics and wives in order to prosper under Hitler. The film doesn't grow from a personal dilemma to a general agon, but it's vivid, atmospheric, memorable.

Passione d'Amore. Nineteenth-century Italy. A strange triangle: handsome army officer, beautiful mistress, most unbeautiful "other woman" who finally captures him. A romance that rigorously examines romanticism.

Reds. All the "exposé" of factual omission and dramatic license doesn't affect the excitement of this flawed but stirring film about John Reed and Louise Bryant. The essence remains true: American romance vs. European political hardheadedness.

Victor/Victoria. Blake Edwards directed and based his script on an old German comedy. Result: a witty, fast farce about transvestism and homosexuality in Paris, 1934.

SK

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one day the shutters are closed. But Tavernier's film has a fabric of reality. Into it, I felt, was stitched another Camus passage, from the essay on Kafka: "The human heart has a tiresome tendency to label as fate only what crushes it. But happiness likewise, in its way, is without reason, since it is inevitable."

In contrast to Tavernier's quiet film comes Richard Brooks's latest. *Wrong Is Right* is possibly the noisiest film ever made, and the most incessantly whirling one. Its only distinction is that, besides being basically rotten, it is also rotten on the surface.

Brooks has, from time to time, been an ambitious and reasonably intelligent writer-director, maker of *The Brothers Karamazov, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Lord Jim*, even *In Cold Blood*. But this script, based on a novel by Charles McCarry, is a weary and artificially whooped-up rerun of the same old apocalyptic, espionage, blackmail-by-atomic-bomb razzmatazz, its only substantive change being a shift from the Soviet threat to a threat by Arabs connected to the energy shortage. So the film is also clumsily timed, coming in a season of oil glut.

I'll spare you the inanities of the plot and the stupidities of the characters—except for three. The U.S. Chief of Staff is patched out of the scraps of George C. Scott's role in *Dr. Strangelove*. But the President of the United States, as played by George Grizzard, is reassuring in a way: he shows us that there are cartoon depths to which the present real-life incumbent hasn't yet descended. The protagonist is an American television news star, played by Sean Connery, whose whiz-bang activities make a secret agent's life seem sedentary. In 1971 Connery gave up playing James Bond, with lots of publicity, because he said he was weary of the role's comic-book juvenilities. Not sufficiently weary, I guess: or else re-invigorated.

Have you noticed how skimpy film crowds are getting in American pictures? In the recent *Love and Money* a Central American president's audience looked like a summer-stock handful of extras. In *Wrong Is Right* the crowds at political rallies couldn't elect a dogcatcher even in their own towns.

Brooks's editor was apparently St. Vitus. The score is by Artie Kane, who is certainly the deafest composer since Beethoven.

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photo Margaret Bourke-White

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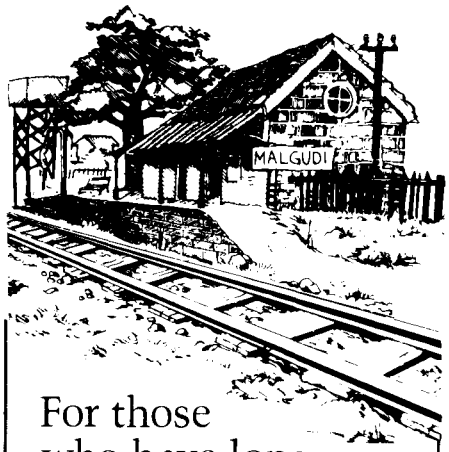

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Mark Crispin Miller On Television

Patriotism Without Tears

Liberals are not very good at sounding patriotic. They may have performed wonders for the American Way, but as soon as they start trying to get emotional about Old Glory and the fruited plain, it's time to look for the nearest exit, because this is an act that never works. Those fits of fervor always seem to be missing something, whereas the nasty raptures of the ultraright are usually pretty convincing. Right-wingers have just what it takes for a compelling show of patriotism: they long to unite in order to face off against an enemy. These folks know, or sense, that the deep joy of patriotism arises from the wish to jump up and down, with a good conscience, on some alien face. When they salute our flag or hum our anthem, therefore, they do it with the credible passion of the semicivilized. Liberals, on the other hand, are much too finicky and dishonest to admit these cruel appetites, and so their flag waving seems forced, evasive, moralistic. Rather than express a love of country, in fact, the liberal show of "patriotism" expresses mostly fear of what true patriotism really means, its unpleasant origins, its cruel necessity.

We will never have a better example of such repression than we had on the evening of Sunday, March 22, when ABC broadcast a great big mess called "I Love Liberty," produced by Norman Lear and featuring scads of the famous and quasi-famous, all enacting moments that supposedly hailed America, "warts and all." There was Rod Steiger as "an angry gay," Burt Lancaster as Learned Hand, Mary Tyler Moore as Mrs. Stephen Douglas, Judd Hirsch as a prewar immigrant, and so on. Ostensibly a celebration of George Washington's birthday, although aired weeks later, this two-hour hodgepodge of songs and skits was actually meant as an upbeat rebuke to the American right: "liberals can be patriots too!" the show insisted, perversely using right-wing devices—marching bands and marching songs, sermons, an enormous flag, the word "America" much abused—to push liberal values, as if those devices have no historical connotations, and can simply be used to any end by anyone. Rather than symbolize the particular impulses of our national past, in other words, these images were emptied of all their disconcerting meanings and reduced to ornament—colorful bits of "Americana" used to liven up a liberal pep rally.

For instance, toward the beginning of the show, Barry Goldwater, a colorful bit of Americana if ever there was one, appeared on one of the stages in the midst of a vast, packed amphitheater, to introduce a certain production number. Looking a little dazed, he explained that, while *he'd* wanted the number to be very grand and showy, his associates had wanted something "subtle," and so they'd had to do what Americans do best: "we compromised." There then took place a spectacle of such colossal incoherence and vulgarity that words must fail to do it justice. Three actors made up like the Spirit of '76 came limping rhythmically on stage to fife and drum and wild applause, and then all hell broke loose. It was our national heritage as Heironymus Bosch might have dreamt it up after a night of too many Cheezits and TV shows. There was a black marching band, a yellow marching band, a piebald marching band, all rushing nowhere in different directions and blaring out completely disjunct semitunes; a black youth heaving a baton in one place, a little Oriental girl flailing one somewhere else, and a whole platoon of Indian cheerleaders; four doughboys cavorting, a group of Western settlers skipping in a ring, three women dressed like Betsy Ross flying their flag like a kite, a bunch of Confederate officers casually waving, Uncle Sam on stilts, some busty suffragettes, an obscure trio of unicyclists wearing bright blue shirts with stars all over them, everyone jerking around within an echoing din of drum beats, roars, screams, and tinny snatches of martial melody. This chaos went on until a giant flag unfurled and several thousand balloons fell out of the ceiling, and then there was silence. "Well,"

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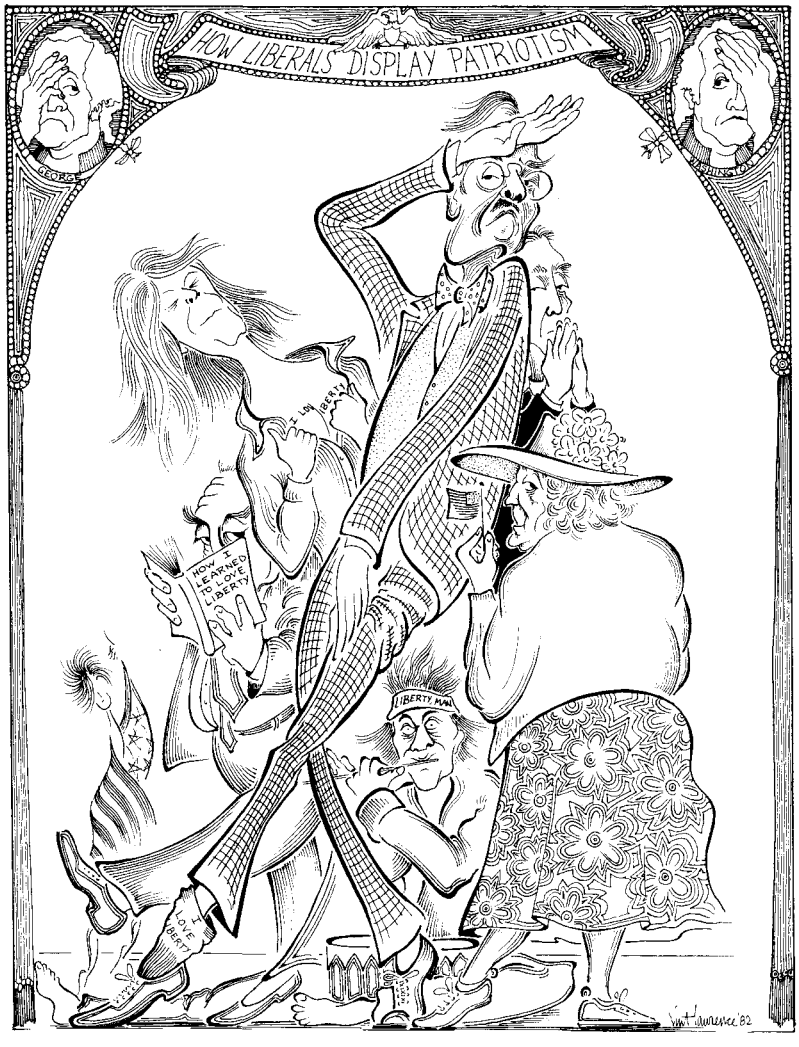
said the haggard Goldwater, trying to look arch, "that was a compromise!"

In fact, it was a nightmare, and therefore quite revealing. Although intended to evoke America's heritage, those hectic moments suggested nothing about our history except our total alienation from it. The spectacle reduced our past to an illegible jumble of clichés; and one function of that unlikely collage was to obscure the violence of patriotism beneath the consoling fictions of the liberal world view. The scene's general anarchy served to conceal the martial implications of all those varsity images. The rigid formation of each marching band, suggestive of the well-run phalanx, was impossible to notice in that disorderly mass; and none of the tunes was allowed to dominate the action with its stirring rhythms, but all were broken into harmless fragments by the incessant cutting. Moreover, what was most remarkable about the scene, aside from its confusion, was its pervasively, schematically multiracial character, which also functioned to drown out the call to arms. The show attempted to redeem the threatening icons of the past simply by tinting them: take the drum major, the majorette, the marching musicians, etc., and make them yellow, black, brown, white, red, so that they stand for Brotherhood instead of glorifying combat. Thus the chilling homogeneity of the tight-knit clan of warriors—at once the end and basis of the patriotic impulse—disappears into a heartwarming image of diversity, of men too various to find the solidarity that leads to, depends on, arises from, war.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This motley and peaceable "America" seemed, paradoxically, to be no nation at all, but a vague constellation that includes, and thereby cancels out, all the lesser, more definite nations of the earth. Martin Sheen functioned as the show's chorus and in that capacity paid tribute to the grand nullity of such a national ideal. He appeared early on, pacing the stage, and addressing the spirit of George Washington in a self-righteous, hectoring bark: "Mr. President, I'm willing to bet you that right *here* in this *hall, right here tonight*, there are people representative of *every nation on earth*! Let's find out!" So saying, he began a sort of global roll call, his epithets eliciting an ever-growing wave of mob approval: "First of all, how many people here are native Americans? Lemme hear from ya! Native Americans! How many Hispanics? How many Hispanics here? How many blacks?" Having suggested that all blacks, Hispanics, and Indians have come here from three countries, Sheen went on to catalog the rest of the world: "How many Irish? Italians?! Poles! Germans! Swedes! How many Israelis?! Arabs! C'mon! Let's hear it! How many Russians?! Chinese! Vietnamese! Portuguese! Dutch! French! Even British!" Finally, the applause had grown into a narcissistic self-ovation of awesome magnitude, which Sheen brought to a climax with the ultimate show-biz rallying cry: "*C'mon, let's hear it for us!*"

This moment betrayed the suicidal inclination which is implicit in the liberal ideal of a pacific diversity. "Every nation on earth," each with its own long-standing character, disappears into "America," which itself remains amorphous, absorbing everything and therefore ending up as nothing. The nations ultimately mattered less than the mere fact of their membership in this blank federation; Sheen's ethnic chant soon became inaudible under the roar of that American applause. Thus, again, the show denied the very impulse which it seemed to be indulging. While patriotism has, over the centuries, served to harden the identities of peoples in their bloody oppositions, this "America" undoes the results of all that painful definition, reducing the nations to so many multicolored specks in its own indistinct self-portrait.

It was indeed a featureless portrait which was televised throughout the broadcast of "I Love Liberty"; and the same national image continues to appear on television every hour, every day. Lear's "America" recalled that variegated and good-natured herd which we see in ads for Pepsi, Coke, Dr. Pepper, Replay gum, etc.—a mass of happy shoppers, apparently defined by superficial differences, but fundamentally united in their urge to purchase things no more distinctive than themselves. We are meant to see these shoppers as our models; and television would, ultimately, have us do no more than look at what it tells us that we are,

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and then go out and buy whatever it takes to resemble that prescribed image. The process must (or does) lead to a deadlock of eternal self-obsession which was all that "I Love Liberty" could offer as the end of "patriotism." There was Sheen's brash invitation to self-love; and, later in the show, Robin Williams ended a stand-up bit as the American flag with this fond sign-off: "Don't look at it as saluting *me*—look at it as saluting your*selves*, . . . If I may say so from here, long may *you* wave." (Vast applause.)

For all its strain and hoopla, then, the show presented us with an America that is not really worth much, an America that conforms entirely to the feeble wishes of contemporary liberalism: it is a nation of good feelings and easy acquiescence, risking nothing, making no demands, inspiring neither trust nor passion. "I Love Liberty." The title is subtly antipatriotic, denying all community in favor of a pseudo-personal preference, as if freedom were a Big Mac or a Seven-Up, a pleasure for the individual consumer. Moreover, like the show itself, and like the ideology the show expressed, the title deletes from patriotism anything that might seem negative about it, any suggestion of hatred, intolerance, bigotry, the desire for conquest or revenge. These things are unattractive; and yet they have been the essential determinants of culture, helping to create all that is best even while threatening it. Although liberals deny the crucial value of compulsion—of hierarchy, principle, force, repression, tragedy—they themselves become most passionate when faced with the very things which they would extirpate: "I Love Liberty" was itself the result of such antagonism, although the show lacked the spirit to name its enemies openly. It could have been a masterpiece of patriotism if it had tried somehow to face and include those enemies, who are also very much Americans, and who also hate as well as love.

LIGHT IN AUGUST

The Polish August: The Self-Limiting Revolution by Neal Ascherson

(Viking, 299 pp., $14.95)

To write an up-to-date book about contemporary Poland is impossible: the events will inevitably outpace the process of publishing. This does not mean that each book is automatically obsolete or its author's assessments wrong. Mr. Ascherson's main purpose was to describe and analyze Polish revolutionary events from August 1980 to July 1981. He managed to add, at the last moment, a brief postscript on the first days of military dictatorship after December 13.

The book is obviously based on a good acquaintance with the recent history of Poland, and on a great deal of sympathy with its predicament. I found only three or four very minor factual inaccuracies, not worth mentioning. There is a difference, however, between the second half of the book, which tells the history of Solidarity from the beginning of the August strikes, and the first half, in which Mr. Ascherson succinctly depicts the entire postwar epoch. The account of history since August—of factional struggles in the Party, hesitations in Solidarity, compromises that failed and a revolution that imposed limits on itself—is fair and convincing, though some lacunae impoverish the report. First, the author hardly mentions the variety of trends within Solidarity and fails to note the fact that it was factory workers who for most of the time were pressing for more "radical" policy, often blaming both their advisers and some of Solidarity's leaders for too conciliatory attitudes and too many concessions. Second, Mr. Ascherson barely broaches the problems of economic reforms which Solidarity faced and tried, however incompletely, to solve, even though they came to occupy an increasingly prominent place in the history of the movement.

In the seventh chapter the author locates Solidarity in the long history of working-class struggle for economic management and of worker council ideology. In fact, the story is more complicated. Whether Solidarity should defend the interests of workers against the state or take up the responsibility for running the hopelessly shattered economy—this was the subject of a long-lasting debate. At a certain moment a separate movement emerged which aimed at a nationwide self-management system, and if Mr. Ascherson had talked with Solidarity leaders he could not have failed to notice that they were well aware of the inevitable conflict that would arise between the worker councils running the factories and the unions representing the interests of the employees. Certainly the reform plans elaborated under the auspices of Solidarity were somewhat sketchy and never had a chance of being tested; had they been implemented they would have operated by trial and error for a number of years before they could take a distinct shape. Nevertheless, they were the only existing alternative to Poland's so-called central planning and command economy, the utter bankruptcy of which was so glaring that even Party leaders hardly dared justify it in principle.

I do not know if or to what extent the author has mastered the Polish tongue. I notice, however, that some parts of the story are missing, perhaps because the material available is only in Polish. Next to the examples just mentioned, the author does not discuss the exploitation of the Polish economy by the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, which, according to some, was one of the major causes of the catastrophe. I realize that the author makes no claim to provide his reader with a scholarly analysis. This is journalistic account (I do not use the adjective in a pejorative sense), and it should be assessed accordingly. Nonetheless, this need not prevent the reader from noticing both the missing parts of the story and its ideological biases.

THE LATTER are more clearly displayed in the first half of the book, which—in contrast to the mostly first-hand history of Solidarity—seems to be based mainly on other journalistic reports (some of them also strongly biased) and on conversations with various people who represent a large range of political attitudes (the list is included in

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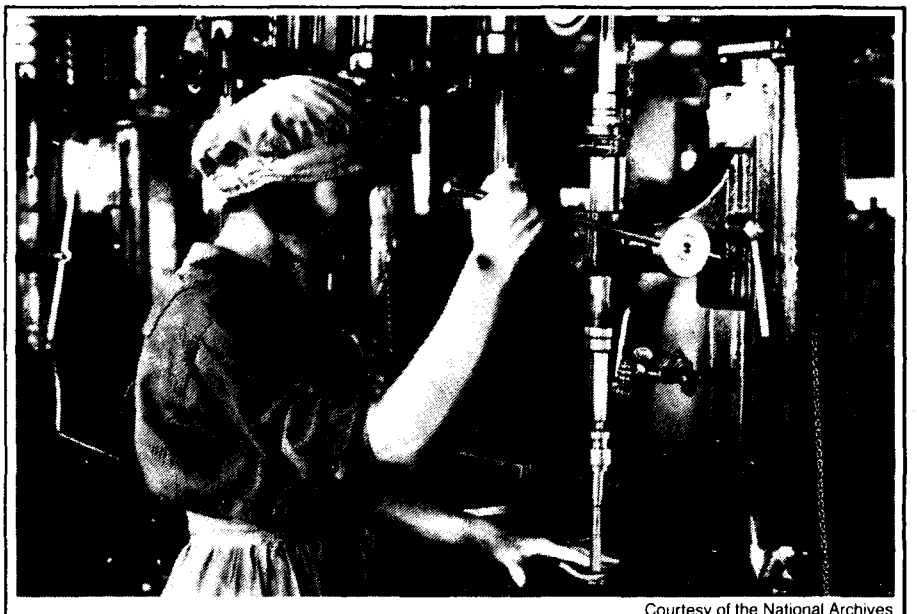
the preface); I can only guess whose opinions and information were used in Mr. Ascherson's book and whose were discarded.

The first chapters, in which Mr. Ascherson traces the Polish road to Communism back to the beginning of World War I, unfortunately include a number of ambiguities and omissions that display the author's ideological preferences but are less than helpful to an uninformed reader. Some of them should be mentioned. To say that "the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and the small Communist Party (KPP) held great influence over the growing working class" in the 1920s is no doubt true—but only in the sense that the Labour Party and the National Front could be said to hold great influence over the British workers. This is a minor point, though. More important is the author's attempt to prove that Communism in Poland—and all over Eastern Europe—was not that bad, after all, in the first years after the war, and that the Americans are to be blamed for its degeneration. Mr. Ascherson tries to show that during the war and in 1945 the Polish Communists were basically right, although it is clear that his knowledge of the history of these years is rather scanty. He says that

> at the end of the war there was a hazy consensus that there should be a strong government to break the power of the landlords and take the industry out of foreign hands. But only the communists and, to a lesser extent, the members of the revived Polish Socialist Party were clear about the details of such a programme. . . . In 1945, when all other political creeds seemed to have been so thoroughly discredited by events, socialism had no effective challenger.

Meanwhile "the London and Warsaw resistance leaders, for all their disavowal of the follies of pre-war policy, still believed in an absolute form of independence, unqualified by binding alliance to any power."

These are typical examples of the author's incomplete truths. The "power of the landlords" was hardly a problem in 1945, and both the peasant and Socialist parties (in exile as well as in Poland) were in agreement about what to do with its remnants; the "industry in foreign hands" was a nonissue in the devastated Poland of 1945. And among the things the Poles lacked during the war, political programs were hardly near the top of the list: there were plenty of them, both in the country and among political groups in exile. "The absolute independence" (and who were the Polish leaders proclaiming that Poland needed no alliances?) is a kind of muddled expression suggesting that because no such independence was really possible, there was no difference worth remarking between the alliance of Western Europe with the United States and the bondage of Central Europe forcibly incorporated into the Soviet empire. That "socialism had no effective challenger" in Poland may mean either that "Sovietism had no effective military challenger," which is perfectly true, or that nobody could have even conceived of a Poland that would not be controlled by the Soviets, which is perfectly untrue. It may imply that Socialism and Sovietism are the same thing and that most Poles approved it on this assumption or, on the contrary, that Socialism and Sovietism are incompatible and that the Poles approved the former and



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rejected the latter (or vice versa).

Yet nothing is clearly said; Mr. Ascherson's description of the postwar history teems with ambiguities. The leaders of the resistance, both in Poland and abroad, seem to have been, in his version, driven by a foolish reluctance to accept the Sovietized Poland—for no better reason than the destruction of the Polish state jointly by Hitler and Stalin in 1939, mass deportations and bloodshed in Eastern Poland in 1939-1941, the Katyn massacre (Mr. Ascherson notes that Stalin's attempt to blame the Nazis for the massacre was "ill supported by evidence"; indeed), and the events of 1944. Of those events the author seems to know little; he asserts that "for the most Poles . . . the 'Polish road' to Socialism began also to look like the path of patriotic common sense," that in the first years Stalin did not interfere in Polish affairs, that he did not intend to Sovietize Eastern Europe and only the Truman Doctrine compelled him to do so, and that he was open-minded about the future of the Polish state.

It has indeed been fashionable in recent years among American and British journalists to aver that both the Sovietization of Eastern and Central Europe and the cold war were forced upon Uncle Joe by ugly American imperialists. The theory does not become credible by being fashionable, and Mr. Ascherson's astonishing arguments in its favor do not substantiate it any better.

I find two arguments in his book. First, Stalin

> did not intend to 'sovietize' Eastern Europe; he actually took steps to prevent the Italian and French Communist Parties from using their enormous strength to control their political scene.

In other words, because Stalin did not want to swallow France in 1945, he could not possibly have wanted to swallow Poland. Second, Stalin was "open-minded" about Poland's future because, "after all, only five years before he had agreed with Hitler to abolish it altogether." In other words, because Stalin wanted to destroy Poland forever in 1939, he could not have possibly wanted to enslave it in 1945, but must have had much more benign ideas. One wonders what could not be made true with this sort of logic.

WHAT IN REALITY happened in Eastern Europe before the Truman Doctrine was proclaimed leaves no doubt about Soviet intentions. The Home Army troops which wanted to cooperate with the Soviet army were, from the beginning, either destroyed or arrested and deported; no wonder that they were subsequently rather reluctant to count on Soviet benevolence. And what about the "negotiations" to which sixteen leaders of the Polish anti-Nazi underground were invited by the Soviet generals—only to be kidnapped on the spot, deported to the Soviet Union, and jailed? Such crucial facts are simply never mentioned, and Stalin's open-mindedness is vindicated by silence. (I do admit, however, that there was a difference between the Soviet behavior in the areas east of the Vistula, which the Red Army occupied prior to August 1944, and in Central and Western Poland, which it conquered after the January 1945 offensive.) The fraudulent plebiscite of June 1946 (not mentioned), the fraudulent election of January 1947 (mentioned), the destruction of East German Social Democracy (not mentioned)—all this happened before the Truman Doctrine. The massive police terror used to destroy the peasant party in Poland in 1946 and 1947; the fact that Communists had full power in the army, security, police censorship, and foreign affairs; that Soviet officers (in 1946, not only in 1950) occupied a number of major posts in the Polish Army; that even the Party and government telephone network was run by NKVD—

A PARABLE

It was an epoch of heroes.
So this young boy, this nobody,
making his way from one plain to another,
picks up a small stone among the cold, unspecified
rocks of the hillside. It is a pleasant day.
At his feet, normal vegetation, the few white flowers
like stars, the leaves woolly, sage-green:
at the bottom of the hill are corpses.

What is a hero's attitude
toward death? David, looking down, feels
contempt for exhaustion, coinciding
with a calling to defend live forms:

Who is the enemy? Who has distributed
the compact bodies of the Jews
in this unprecedented silence? Disguised as dirt,
the scattered army sees the beast, Goliath,
towering above the childish shepherd.
They shut their eyes. And all the level earth
becomes the shattered surface of a sea, so disruptive
is that fall. In the ensuing dust, David
lifts his hand: then it is his, the hushed
completed kingdom—

Fellow Jews, to graph a hero's journey
is to trace a mountain: hero to god, god to ruler.
At the precipice, the moment we don't want to hear about:
the stone is gone; now
the hand is the weapon.

On the palace roof, King David stares across
the shining city of Jerusalem
into the face of Bathsheba, and perceives
his own amplified desire. At heart he feels nothing.
She is like a flower in a tub of water. Above his head,
the clouds move. And it comes to him he has attained
all he is capable of dreaming.

LOUISE GLÜCK

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all these and many other facts are simply absent from Mr. Ascherson's story. In an account which purports to offer Western readers an idea of Poland's postwar history such omissions are bound to distort the overall picture.

To be sure, nobody would deny that in Poland, the years 1945 to 1949, for all the bloody struggles and atrocities, differed significantly from the fully Stalinist era of 1950 to 1954 and that this transition period proved to be important for the cultural survival of Poland. There were elements of genuine pluralism both in politics and in culture and the Communist ideology was still alive in the minds of Communists. And yet no one in Poland—least of all the Communists themselves—was ignorant of the fact that the Communists were a small minority trying to run an essentially hostile society. Neither were there any doubts among them as to the "necessity" of destroying other political forces. Mr. Ascherson's statement that "much of the [Polish Socialist Party's] membership accepted also that a merger with the PPR (Communist Party) was necessary" is clearly wrong if "necessary" means "desirable"; if it means simply that they had no force to resist, the saying is true but, again, ambiguously expressed. Mr. Ascherson probably knows little about how the "merger" was achieved. He simply ought to forebear from making judgments on such matters. The Communists of this period were wrong but they were, at least a good many of them, committed to the Communist idea, and they naively expected that in due course they would be able to convince the society of its virtue. But they were less naive than Mr. Ascherson is three-and-a-half decades later and they had no illusions about the real value of the Party's democratic slogans or its will to achieve total power.

ONE PERCEIVES in Mr. Ascherson's book a kind of leftist nostalgia for a nice Communism that could have materialized, yet failed to do so (because of those nasty Americans, to be sure, not because there was something wrong with Communism). It reminds me of the Trotskyites of old who for decades were ruefully ruminating upon the events of the early 1920s in Russia, dreaming of the splendid Communism that would have been built if only their hero had remained in power. There is little harm in such fantasies as long as they do not

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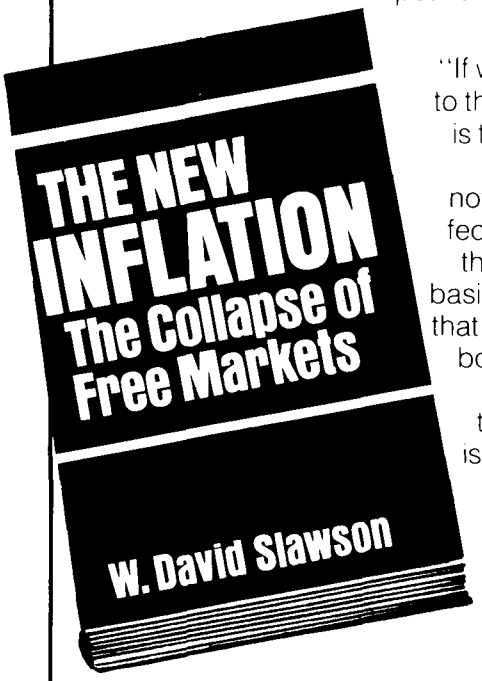

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affect the historical description.

In fact, the author asserts that the entire history of Communist Poland is a series of missed opportunities. First the Americans imposed Stalinism; later on Gomulka failed to use his huge support to make a good variant of Socialism, then Gierek wasted what little credibility he had enjoyed; and, most recently, the hopes for a renewal were foiled by the military dictatorship for which the ultimate responsibility, he rightly says, lies upon the Soviets. One should ask, however, what sort of conditions would have had to prevail for those opportunities to be preserved and how they could have been exploited within the Soviet empire without infringing the fundamental dogma of Communism: the unrestricted power of the party-state. Whatever historical reasons might be adduced to explain the development of the Soviet system, its establishment means that any loosening of slavery, far from defusing the accumulated social tensions, is likely to generate more pressure and more demands, thereby threatening the entire political fabric of Sovietism with collapse. Besides, the Poles, not unlike other denizens of the promised land, have learned from decades of experience that only social pressure and resistance hold out the promise of improving their lot; whatever they could gain had to be extorted and would never be given by the grace of the ruling cliques. This truth might not be very comforting, yet it has been borne out time and again in all parts of the world that were conquered, whether directly or by proxy, by the Soviet empire. It is easy to show that to the extent a "reform Communism" is possible, it means a pressure which succeeds in making Communism less, and not more, Communist. All economic reforms, insofar as they achieve any degree of success, go in the same direction: partial restoration of the market, of "capitalism"; all political reforms consist in limiting the power of the Communist Party. Thus their meaning is essentially anti-Communist. If Mr. Ascherson has in mind another concept of Communism, he should have explained it.

IN HIS QUEST for something that could be truthfully said about the merits of Communism, Mr. Ascherson found its adversary: the Church. In no way does he do justice to the role the Church and the Catholic loyalty of Poles have played in the vicissitudes of postwar Poland, and some of his remarks on the subject are misleading. He notices, quite rightly, that the political and police pressures on the Church have been much milder than in the Soviet Union (though he ought to have said something about how this pressure has been exerted and what kinds of police measures have been used to limit, to split, and, in the longer perspective, to destroy the Polish religious tradition). And he believes that the Communists took up the great task, never properly performed before, of building "the first lay state in Polish history." This, however, is an old Communist cliché which bears little resemblance to the facts.

THE SEPARATION of Church and state implies that the state is indifferent to the religious beliefs and allegiances of its citizens. By systematically discriminating against the Catholics, the Communist state achieved the result opposite to what "the lay state" is supposed to mean: it is not a lay, but an anti-religious state. The author's summary of the famous 1966 letter of the Polish episcopate to the German bishops is less than accurate:

> the Poles were being invited by their own Church leaders to ask the Germans for pardon, to agree that the removal of the German population from land regarded as historically Polish could somehow be equated with the five years of genocide, torture and starvation which the Germans had imposed upon Poland.

He accuses the Church of trying to extort more and more impossible concessions from the state. "There was an element of bluff in this escalation," he says.

> The Church was eager to have its position and its demands secured in a formal agreement recognizing the legal status of the Church in Poland, and suspicious that Gierek was seeking an agreement with the Vatican behind its back. . . . The Church wanted its legal recognition by the régime to precede any such treaty between Warsaw and the Vatican.

One wonders what is really so appalling in the Church's desire to have its status defined in law and why its demand to have a say in negotiations between Warsaw and the Vatican is really so exorbitant. Mr. Ascherson seems to see the Church as an essentially reactionary force in Poland by comparison with Communism; yet nowhere does he explain the criteria of such an evaluation.

The book is amply supplied with ideologically loaded adjectives, the sense of which he does not elucidate. Mr. Ascherson notices that in the last years of Gierek's era "the convergence towards a more conservative religious conception of liberty was real enough." Perhaps, yet he fails to explain what this "conservative" concept of liberty means in contradistinction to the progressive concept he presumably favors. About Cardinal Wojtyla's election to the papal throne he says: "The Pope, it soon appeared, took an almost Calvinist view of his election. God, rather than the Conclave of Cardinals, chose him, and chose him because he was a Pole." Apart from the plainly absurd use of the adjective "Calvinist," such sayings are no more than expressions of the author's ideological animosities disguised as factual statements. When, on the other hand, he mentions the activity of KOR (with a sympathy to which I can hardly object, being myself a member of of this body), he states that Kuron's and Michnik's "inspiration remained Marxist"; this is wishful thinking. It is simply not true.

THE FOREGOING remarks should not suggest that this book is fundamentally wrong or misconceived. I naturally insist on points I find objectionable, but the central focus of the book, indicated in the title—that is, the history of Solidarity—is fair, well informed, and instructive. The author's sympathies are clearly on the side of antitotalitarian democratic movements in Poland. I would say in general that I share the author's sympathies without sharing his antipathies, which seem to me molded by an ideological bias. Neither do I share his belief that a society that would be both free and Communist is feasible or even conceivable. All the possible margins of freedom in Communist states are, and will be, expunged. The more freedom those states offer to their citizens, the less Communist they are.

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI

Leszek Kolakowski is currently a professor at the University of Chicago. In March 1968 he was expelled from the University of Warsaw for political reasons.

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SUFFERING TURNED TO INSIGHT

Psychiatrist of America: The Life of Harry Stack Sullivan by Helen Swick Perry

(Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 462 pp., $20)

Harry Stack Sullivan had considerable influence on the development of American psychiatry and merits this detailed biography. Helen Swick Perry was managing editor of Sullivan's journal, *Psychiatry*, for three years before his death in 1949, and so had the advantage of knowing him personally. She is evidently conscientious and has spent much time and labor on research. In spite of this, certain episodes in Sullivan's life have eluded her, possibly because he was expert in covering his tracks.

Sullivan was born in 1892 in a rural part of New York State. His ancestors, on both sides, were Irish immigrants who fled "The Great Hunger." Two older brothers died in infancy, and Sullivan was raised as an only child, a circumstance which deeply influenced his point of view and his contributions to psychiatry. His mother indulged him; but his father, who was less intelligent than his gifted son, and from a humbler family than his wife, was so taciturn that there was virtually no communication between them. When Sullivan was two-and-a-half years old, he was transferred to the care of his maternal grandmother. The exact period of this separation from his mother is unknown, as is the nature of her illness, which necessitated Sullivan's removal. However, it requires no great psychological penetration to see that Sullivan had a bad start. Mothers who have lost two children are almost bound to pamper a surviving third. Children who are deserted in infancy by adoring mothers not infrequently find it difficult to trust women. Boys who cannot model themselves upon their fathers have difficulty in establishing their own masculine identity. It is not surprising that Sullivan's maturation was delayed; that he never married; and that he seems to have been predominantly homosexual, although reported to have had short-lived sexual relations with members of both sexes.

HARRY STACK SULLIVAN BY MARGARET BOURKE WHITE

It is also not surprising that the man who is chiefly remembered for *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* should, throughout his life, have manifested obvious difficulties in his relationships. As a child, he made one close friend who was five years older: Clarence Bellinger, who was also an only child, and who also became a psychiatrist. Throughout Sullivan's life, the theme of financial irresponsibility recurs. He borrowed from his friends, failed to repay them, but was not deterred from offering the same friends lavish entertainment or from furnishing his offices and his homes luxuriously. Some of his extravagances resemble the compulsive buying of the deprived. In 1933, he was declared a bankrupt, with debts of $28,000. But Sullivan was never grasping, and often treated patients free. He was merely incompetent and inconsiderate. When he invited a younger cousin to dine with him at the Waldorf-Astoria, he not only turned up an hour late, but also failed to bring any money with him. Needless to say, the $25 Sullivan borrowed from his dinner companion was never returned.

In 1908 he entered Cornell on a scholarship. But in the spring of 1909, he was suspended, and disappeared from sight for about two years. The offense he committed was connected with intercepting mail delivery. It is probable that he was the cat's paw of a gang of youths who were involved in the illegal ordering of drugstore supplies which were then intercepted and sold. It is not clear whether Sullivan was sent to jail or to a mental hospital; but, from what he later wrote about the problems of isolated adolescents, the latter seems more probable. His interest in schizophrenia antedated his psychiatric training; and he once confided to his biographer that he had been in the hospital with schizophrenia, expressing his relief that lobotomy and electroshock were not then available.

As an adult, Sullivan was considered to be difficult by his superiors and was often intolerant of, and harsh to, his juniors. Near the end of his life, he complained that "he only knew patients." Even Jimmie, twenty years younger than Sullivan, who acted as his cook, housekeeper, and general factotum from 1927 onward, had started as a patient. How is it that this disturbed, disturbing, apparently alienated individual not only made significant contributions to psychiatry, but also inspired

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affection, indeed adulation, in so many individuals? Perry is better at answering the first half of the question than she is at explaining the latter.

Sullivan bridged a gap. Although accepting some of Freud's insights, he was never a psychoanalytic convert. On the other hand, physical treatment of mental disorders was anathema to him. Unlike Freud, he had experience of psychotic illness, both as patient and as psychiatrist. He did not regard schizophrenia as an organic defect of the brain which produced delusions and hallucinations that could be dismissed as "mad" and, therefore, incomprehensible. Nor did he think, as Freud did, that psychotic disorders were untreatable psychologically because of the sufferer's inability to make transference relationships. Sullivan thought of schizophrenia as a personality disorder which everyone who recalled the turmoils of adolescence had experienced to some degree—a disorder, therefore, that was comprehensible. In advance of current opinion, Sullivan realized that the rehabilitation of schizophrenics depended upon the establishment and maintenance of intimate personal contact. In his work at the Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital in Towson, Maryland, he taught that schizophrenics were like other people; that their difficulties in communication were merely exaggerations of what the shy, the distrustful, the isolated, and the handicapped felt when confronted with the extraverted, "well-adjusted." He realized, long before it became generally accepted, that the best people to make contact with schizophrenics were those who had suffered the same kinds of difficulties. Who could be better than Sullivan himself, who confessed to a personal schizophrenic episode?

Sullivan completed only one book himself. The rest of his writings are compiled, mostly by others, from his lectures and papers. As always happens with those who influence others by their presence rather than by their writings, Sullivan's importance has faded and his insights have been appropriated by others, often without recognition of their origin. Alfred Adler has suffered the same fate, for the same reasons.

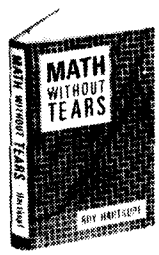
All psychiatrists generalize from their personal experience. Freud, mistakenly, considered psychoanalysis to be a science. Jung, more percipiently, stated that his ideas were a "subjective confession." Sullivan was one of those inspirational figures who made creative use of his own psychopathology. His affinity with those labeled "mad" showed up the pejorative nature of that appellation. It is wrong to call incomprehensible that which we are too insensitive or idle to understand. Sullivan's capacity for identification with the insulted and injured, together with his unrivaled capacity for making relationships with them, are ample compensation for the defects of his relationships with his peers.

Helen Swick Perry has produced a workmanlike biography that probably tells us as much as anyone will want to know about this still enigmatic figure. She has thoroughly documented Sullivan's relationships with Clara Thompson, Adolf Meyer, and other psychiatrists of the era. Sullivan's founding of the William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation and the journal *Psychiatry* are rightly regarded as major achievements. But I wish that she would not write sentences like, "At the time that I knew him, I was not aware of any dimensions of commonality." "I did not realize that we had so much in common," is equally clear and less pretentious.

ANTHONY STORR

Anthony Storr's most recent book is *The Art of Psychotherapy* (Methuen). He is a British psychoanalyst.

MATH WITHOUT TEARS



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950 MILLION GERMANS?!

Headbirths or The Germans Are Dying Out
by Günter Grass
translated by Ralph Mannheim

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 144 pp., $9.95)

There are ropewalkers, lion tamers, and clowns among novelists; also bareback riders, trapeze artists, strong men, and illusionists; and once in awhile an impresario will appear who commands a whole circus, as Günter Grass did a few years ago with *The Flounder*, the three-ring, cymbal-clashing, sawdust-kicking entertainment he gave himself as a fiftieth birthday present. *Headbirths* is a much more modest performance, a mere juggling act—but let that "mere" not imply any disparagement of the art of juggling, or of Günter Grass's command of it. Anyone who can keep two approximately equal handfuls of real-life and fictional characters smoothly circulating and even conversing in the same narrative space, without giving any impression of artificiality, has earned my respect; and Grass throws in at least a dozen other items of widely disparate bulk and shape—the Christian Democratic and the Social Democratic parties of Germany, for example; the Chinese and the Berlin walls; a novel-in-progress called *Headbirths*; Orwell's slavish decade (is it ours as well?) and Camus's defiant Sisyphus; hunger in Asia and a vacuum-sealed German liverwurst that survives the combined ravages of time, tropical heat, the probing slice of a border inspector's knife, and Günter Grass's whimsy. Time and time again he considers dismissing the sausage from his plot, just as a master juggler will seem to drop one particularly unmanageable rubber ball, only to cradle it on his foot or in the nape of his neck for a while and toss it back into the general whirl.

The novel (but is it a novel?) begins with a frightening event that took place three years ago in Shanghai, the city where 11 million out of 950 million Chinese live. Günter Grass was walking

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in the street with his wife, Ute, surrounded by countless identically dressed bicycle riders, when suddenly he was "hit by an idea, a speculative reversal: *what if, from this day on, the world had to face up to the existence of nine hundred fifty million Germans. . . .*"

The italics are mine, but I believe Mr. Grass would agree that the terrifying implications of such a thought cannot be emphasized strongly enough. He himself asks:

> Is such a thought possible, is such a thought permissible? Is such a world conceivable, a world inhabited by nine hundred fifty million Germans, who, even if the rate of increase is kept down to a bare 1.2 percent, will nevertheless multiply to something over one billion two hundred million Germans by the year 2000?

Back in Berlin a month later, after brief stopovers in Singapore, Manila, and Cairo, the Grasses encountered, much to their surprise, precisely the inverse strain of speculation in the political debates of the day: the Christian opposition, led by Franz Josef Strauss, was attacking the Socialist-Liberal government for preventing the Germans from multiplying properly. A sizable portion of the sixty million alleged Germans living on German soil were foreigners, they declared. Discount these foreigners—the only natural and obvious Christian-Democratic thing to do—and the most devastating of all future-shocks will present itself: *the Germans are dying out.* Five English words sum it up, but who can sum up the consequences? *Raum* without *Volk*. . . . A world without Germans. . . . Is such a thought possible? Is such a thought permissible?

MR. GRASS, a committed Social Democrat, thinks the unthinkable with a charm and lightheartedness that seem calculated to irritate the hell out of Franz Josef Strauss and his followers. He even wants to make a movie of it—and a comedy at that! He discusses the idea with Volker Schlöndorff, the filmmaker (whose highly praised *Circles of Deceit* is currently playing in American theaters): why not incarnate the whole dilemma in the story of two nice blond northern German representatives of the Liberal-Socialist coalition who want nothing more than to produce a baby but are held back by political scruples? Schlöndorff likes the idea: conception has taken place—the headbirth is on its way.

Part of the pleasure of reading this book is watching Mr. Grass's two homunculi take on an ever more human appearance; it's a little like watching a photograph coming to life in a chemical bath. At first we see little more than a gray shimmer of sociopolitical definition: we learn that they are "indefatigably self-reflecting veterans of the student protest movement." That they are teachers, both of them. That they met at a sit-in against the Vietnam War or the reactionary Springer press, or both. That he is a Social Democrat, while she belongs to the FDP (Free Democrats). That they own a cat. That their mutual love is on an even keel. That she takes the Pill regularly. That they want and don't want a child. Individual features begin to emerge, bit by bit: a set of names to begin with—Dörte and Harm, with a common surname, Peters. They walk, argue, plan, and converse: about having and not having a child, naturally, and also about the world's stockpiled dangers and multiplying disasters, which are the principal reason for Dörte's continual popping of the Pill. Or are they a pretext? Harm seems to think so:

> Evasions, cheap evasions! One day it's the population explosion in the Third World, one day it's the impending Landtag elections . . . and if nothing better turns up, it's some nuclear plant being planned here or somewhere else that stops us from bringing a child, our child, into the world.

But a little later, when she's ready, he's not:

> I tell you, the environment, our school system, the TV compulsion, everything, everything, I tell you, will warp and standardize our child. Same as we've been warped and standardized. And think of our new technologies! Suppose our child is plugged into the school computer . . . .

So it goes, back and forth, from nowhere to nowhere, while Dörte and Harm, these headbirths, travel to Asia and back with "Sisyphus," an agency that organizes worldwide slumming tours for the socially conscious. Gradually, page by page, we watch Herr and Frau Peters take on the color and feeling of breathing, believable characters. Well, *possible* characters, since the film hasn't been made yet. Or will it be a book? Günter Grass is not sure. No one's

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sure of anything any more, with the possible exception of Franz Josef Strauss and his followers. Our young couple's dithering over their possible baby is just one small, private, prototypical instance of an extremely popular Central European parlor game (that's what Grass calls it, but actually it's played on our shores as well), "Ontheonehand-Ontheotherhand." Here is how it goes:

> On the one hand, nuclear power plants represent an incalculable risk; on the other hand, only the new technology can guarantee the standard of living to which we are accustomed. On the one hand, manual farming provides food and employment for eight hundred million Chinese peasants; on the other hand, only mechanized farming methods can increase the yield per acre, thus on the one hand and on the other hand condemning half the peasantry to unemployment or releasing them for other, as yet unspecified, tasks. On the one hand, the slums of Bangkok, Bombay, Manila, and Cairo should be sanitized; on the other hand, sanitized slums encourage more and more peasants to leave the land for the cities. On the one hand and on the other hand.

In the same vein, Harm and Dörte agree that "on the one hand the environmentalists are right; on the other, they'll get Strauss elected." And if Strauss gets elected, what will their child's future be like? On the other hand. . . .

BUT WHICH other hand? Mr. Grass has at least four, like Shiva. Out of the blue, another theme has arisen. Actually, it's been there all along, more or less unnoticed—a theme that doesn't concern Harm and Dörte at all, or Franz Josef Strauss, for that matter, though it does prick him into some furious remarks (in real life, not fiction) about "rats and blowflies." He means writers and, by extension, those who take them seriously. There are no two ways about this subject, as far as Günter Grass is concerned, and this despite the East-West frontier: there is, he says, only one German culture, one single German literature written by East and West German rats and blowflies "who gnaw at the consensus and shit on the newly laundered tablecloth." Fortunate is the land that harbors such tough and intelligent vermin as Günter Grass, Stephan Hermlin, Christa Wolf, Heinrich Böll, Günter Kunert, Martin Walser, and—much too rarely mentioned and read—Hans Erich Nossack; and happy the rat or blowfly who has a consensus to gnaw at and an audience who appreciates the damage. Listen, hungry American reader or writer, to this description of present-day Germany:

> Culture is in. Readings, lectures, exhibitions are taken by storm. Perpetual theatre festivals. Music ad nauseam. Like a drowning man, the citizen grabs at books. The writers of the one and the other German states are more popular than the police of the one permit or than the pollsters of the other acknowledge; this frightens the poets.

The man is half-complaining. He should be informed of our envy.

A final word on the translation: it is as good as, and possibly better than, can be reasonably expected, considering the difficulties presented by the original, and considering the speed at which translators must work in order to make a living. Günter Grass is a vigorous and colorful stylist; he is as inventive in his use of words as he is in his manipulation of themes; his sentences sparkle with puns and wordplay, they delight with satirical feints and stabs. Unfortunately, no one unacquainted with Grass in German would suspect this after reading the comparatively bland, uninflected prose of *Headbirths* in English.

JOEL AGEE

Joel Agee is the author of *Twelve Years: An American Boyhood in East Germany*, published last year by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

THERE WAS MONEY IN HIS SMILE

The Imperial Rockefeller: A Biography of Nelson A. Rockefeller by Joseph Persico

(Simon and Schuster, 314 pp., $15.95)

There is a politics of entourage, where the physical act of a candidate's coming and going somehow seems to generate more popular force than any principle the candidate espouses. Richard Nixon reached desperately for this touch with his double-V arm waves; Edward M. Kennedy is cursed with entourage by now, gawked at like a florid ghost as he passes and pleads to be judged on the issues. And then there was Nelson A. Rockefeller, peerless in transit, the master of entourage politics, who used locomotion the way Marx used words and Daley used patronage. He could fill great mindless tracts of time with imperious bustling, darting from limo to aircraft to meeting spas that, in a crucial distinction from other politicians, he usually owned; hurrying along to confer and dedicate and groundbreak; always reading position papers on the way; swathing through time with a lantern-jawed twinkle as the shouts of "Hi-ya Rocky!" were offered as so much soothing palm-fronding from the public; scattering hyperbole in return with more abandon than his grandfather showed in doling out those dimes.

"Fabulous!" he would declare to a President or, with precisely the same undiscriminating enthusiasm, to a friendly demented man I once witnessed pushing through a crowd on Staten Island and demanding: "Hey, Rocky, sign my drum!" Rockefeller, who tolerated the presumptive public's "Rocky" the way a chorine tolerates "Toots," adjusted his pen and signed the man's big bass drum as if it were another public bond issue. "Fabulous!" "Horrendous!" he once declared in precisely the same tone of raspy euphoria, in a mistaken choice of word meant as praise for an aide. It all seemed the same, the fifteenth new legislative program, the umpteenth passing crowd, all themes for enthusiasm devoid of thesis.

The Imperial Rockefeller, the gentle, vivid memoir composed by Joseph E. Persico, Rockefeller's speech writer for eleven years, reinforces this impression of a well-heeled, well-rehearsed, well-staffed circus parade that huffed and puffed along the political horizon, Fellini-fashion, with no grand design or

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principle in mind other than keeping Rockefeller in center ring. Indeed, this book hints that Rockefeller may be in danger of surviving in history, so soon after death, merely as a "fabulous" footnote, echoing with pathos despite, or because of, all the Cheops-scale creations in concrete he left behind. He was, in Persico's summary, "a paradigm of the unreflective activist, a man for whom unfilled hours had an almost terrifying quality and to whom movement equalled forward motion."

"I doubt that he ever had an original idea in his life," Mike Whiteman, Rockefeller's last counsel as Governor, told Persico. This is an epitaph that might terrify some politicians, but would not likely have fazed Rockefeller, who would casually order "all the right words" from Persico and fresh grandiosities from a walletful of academics like Henry Kissinger whenever he sensed his banners needed fluffing.

SINCE PERSICO was one of the Rockefeller retainers who did not supplement his public salary with a secret subsidy from the leader's private millions, he instantly has more standing to write this book. But it's not exactly the unvarnished view from steerage, and Persico concedes that dedicated service to the hard-driving man was an addiction not easily shaken even now. "Ah belongs to Massa Nelson," Persico once had the refreshing gall to joke by way of self-introduction at cocktails amid a legion of Rockefeller brother employees. None of the empire's other fetchits laughed: "Cold stares were turned on me."

A reader could use an extra healthy lacing of this impudence in Persico's analysis of Rockefeller's life. Instead, the writer rations his cynicism at crucial moments, leaving the reader to elaborate on some interesting topic sentences, such as this juxtaposition in a summary of the odd relations between Nixon and Rockefeller: "Nixon supported Rockefeller's quelling of the prison uprising at Attica, and Rockefeller supported Nixon's invasion of Cambodia." There's so much possibility in the two jagged masks side by side like that!

Still, the book is a well-written collection of anecdotes from a dead court, stories that summarize grudging respect more than open affection on the part of a man who put words together for the millionaire with "an instinct for the banal." The latter quality was virulent, with Rockefeller even demanding kneejerk clichés when Persico tried to omit them in speeches. But Persico did prevail in a tiny way at the end that reveals as much about speech-writing as politics. As Rockefeller departed public life he ordered Persico to compose a round of form-letter notes of personal thanks to his staff. "Preferring to be spared this stock expression of gratitude by the boss," Persico recalls, "I drafted a separate and especially warm letter to myself, which Nelson unhesitatingly signed along with the standard edition." "Fabulous," Nelson might have postscripted.

For anecdotes, the book has the familiar B-matter of the old press clippings. (Let's hope this is last telling of stock tableaus: Rockefeller zooming along in the family jet, stirring his coffee with his eye-glass earpiece, or, gosh, the sight of that millionaire pigging out on his favorite Oreo cookies.) But there's more—a lovely sketch of the day the Shah of Iran flew Nelson and Happy in for a shopping trip at the bazaar of Isfahan, keeping everyone else out while they wandered. Nelson bought an anvil at a good price. ("I'll say it was sculpted by Max Ernst and get thirty-five thousand dollars for it," Nelson joked.) And the night flight out West when he made a telephone call from his jet and somehow had the lights turned on down below on Mount Rushmore.

It's disheartening in some passages to see Rockefeller living up to the press and public clichés about himself: "You know this *is* the best thing since the pyramids," he says, flying over the self-indulgent sprawl of the capital mall construction he conceived and bonded to decades of public taxes. But Persico saves his book from being a mere embroidery on royal life by providing enough wisps of analysis to make the reader reflect regularly on the basic question about Rockefeller, one that actually haunted him from early in his governorship, when he first began fumbling his stratagems for seeking the Presidential nomination. The writer lists some of the usual speculations about Rockefeller never grasping the ways of inner-party politicking. But Persico adds some interesting notes of

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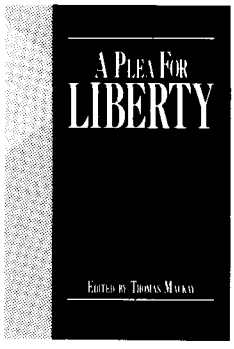

A Plea For Liberty
An Argument Against Socialism and Socialistic Legislation

Edited by Thomas Mackay
Introduction by Herbert Spencer
Foreword by Jeffrey Paul

Twelve essays, first published in 1891, by British authors investigating the impact of "social legislation" upon the people and economy of Great Britain and Australia at the turn of the century. The discussion is both theoretical and empirical. Among subjects considered are: labor unions and labor under coercion or freedom; the condition of the working class; effects of protectionism on labor, agriculture and industry in Australia; free libraries; the role of the State in education; the Post Office, State housing, and State ownership or regulation of utilities. Hardcover $13.50, Softcover $6.00.

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his own: "He never seriously exposed himself to that arch-Republican epithet flung at FDR, 'a traitor to his class.' " He really was conservative, not liberal, and the case can be made from his stated instinct and schizoid public record. Persico quotes an unnamed Rockefeller confidant well on this same interesting speculation about the young Rockefeller having come too close to Roosevelt as a federal volunteer:

> I think Roosevelt was too much for him. He had seen the Presidency first at this exalted level. And for all his apparent arrogance, he never felt quite sure that he had it the same way. This paralyzed him in a sense. His sights were fixed upward, on that man instead of on mediocre people who also made it.

A candid measure of Rockefeller by those who survived him might be to watch secretly how they deal with this book. In my case, I first passed over the temptation of "Marshack, Megan" and sought the passages on the Attica prison uprising. For any reading of Rockefeller, that event of classic ambivalence and bloodshed is the crucial turning, in my view, one that showed Rockefeller's weak familiarity with guiding principle or the notion of consistency itself. It was a situation that left him pragmatic by default—in this case trying first one alternative, negotiation, then another, deadly unguided force, which subdued the uprising and took hostage lives through government gunfire. Afterward, Rockefeller, who always professed great faith in brainstorming problems, was notably quiet and unenthusiastic about this issue-become-reality, this "critical choice," as he labeled the last round of academic studies that filled his days between the offices of Governor and Vice President. Persico notes he treated the Attica episode as a mere mechanistic failure: perhaps the wrong sort of gunfire was applied. Or as an institutional dilemma: the issue got dangerously beyond prison reform to leftist politics. . . .

In Persico's account, Rockefeller never seems entirely blamed for the outcome, while the state prison commissioner, Russell Oswald, receives such attention as a sympathetic man left wretched by circumstance, that the effect smacks of misplaced blame. Anyone there to witness the Attica events could see Rockefeller's most trusted counsels and factotums personally at the crisis for days, taking notes, presumably, for another of the Governor's celebrated dedications to brainstorming public problems. I recall having spotted and pointed out two such ranking officials to a worried woman waiting outside Attica's walls, foolishly making the case to her that Rockefeller was shrewdly patient and would do nothing precipitous to endanger the life of her husband, a hostage in the prison yard. Persico's estimate from then seemed sound: that Rockefeller, mindful of the Ludlow mine massacre that blackened his father's name, would not sanction massive force. But the woman was left a widow by state police a few days later after the pendulum was pushed back in the direction of a tougher stance. It struck me then as a summary of Rockefeller's career, its veerings and flaws. Ever since, the value of political consistency—yea, of uncharismatic plodding—has fascinated me, along with the question of whether that woman's husband would have survived had the situation been under the charge of Arthur Goldberg, the colorless, rhetorically noxious, but boringly consistent public man defeated handily in the previous election by the ebullient Rockefeller.

PERSICO'S BOOK is only a memoir, but I wish it had gone more deeply into this revealing event to explain how much, or little, a weakness this missing core of originality and consistency was in Rockefeller. He doesn't avoid this point, only makes the reader wish for far more of his own thought on the subject. Similarly, there might be greater reflection on other key events such as the 1964 Republican Convention. While all the liberals in the nation could have applauded Rockefeller's performance at the Republicans' Goldwater convention in patiently accepting their laurel of boos, the event left him a certified pariah with the party of his preference. What did Rockefeller the strategist and perpetual aspirant for the Presidency think of this? How could he map his way back into his party? Persico credits him with a certain independence and naiveté, but the record shows he fawned after many of his party critics in subsequent years. In retrospect his life makes one respect the classical value of a political party—its lugging around of an ark of consistency for the occasionally curious, self-doubting politician. Maybe not that party for that politician; but it's the Republican conservatives themselves who deliver stinging reminders to candidates from time to time that the party should serve as more than merely the vehicle for a hoped-for nomination.

IN THIS particular life of Nelson Rockefeller, it's hard to decide which was sadder, his end as a public man, as another impotent Vice President ("I go to funerals. I go to earthquakes.") or his end as a private man, smitten with Megan Marshack, a 22-year-old staff member and former radio reporter whom Persico presents as an "odd composite of precocious worldliness and girlish vulnerability." Persico liked the woman, who was soon installed in an office adjoining Rockefeller's, because "she displayed a refreshing lack of awe before the great man." He describes her searching down Nelson in the Vice Presidential offices, sounding off like Aunt Polly: "Nelson Rockefeller, where have you been?" she would say, confronting him in the corridor, hands on hips. "You're supposed to be at the National Press Club in ten minutes."

It will, of course, be a measure of the Rockefeller empire's strength unto death if Miss Marshack never does emerge to write her own memoir. Persico attends in detail to Rockefeller's final assignation with all too mortal flesh, but he can shed no new light on the question of how Miss Marshack let an hour go by before summoning emergency aid for the fatally stricken Rockefeller.

Persico's book is a pastiche with enough bittersweet honesty in it to make it a commendable beginning for what could prove to be a light shelf of future readings on whomever, whatever, the real Rockefeller was. The speechwriter become book writer has a good eye, although he is too unaccusing with some of the mountebanks in the defunct retinue. There is William J.

"THE NUCLEAR-FREEZE movement represents a *political* initiative. It arises out of the political *successes* Reagan has so far achieved. It has nothing whatever to do with the relative strengths of current U.S. and Soviet strategic forces or with this or that weapons system. Correctly perceived, the nuclear-freeze movement represents *political* desperation; it has attracted the support of most of the defeated political figures of the past generation."

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Ronan, the baronial appointee who may not have been crafty enough in his Rockefeller service to run the New York subways on time, but who was able to separate Nelson from $625,000 in private gifts. Similarly obeisant is a Rockefeller chauffeur who tapped the patron-passenger for $8,000. It's Persico's privilege, with Nelson gone, to hand out his own gifts in this book, and a reader has to admire his instinct in saying quietly positive things about Happy Rockefeller, notably that she was responsible for at least one note of consistency in the Rockefeller career, his resistance to heavy lobbying to ban abortion.

Before he is done, Persico makes clear how superficial was the image of the blintz-eating millionaire spilling enthusiasm in the streets. He was far more guarded and reticent than that, critically so, perhaps, in the pursuit of the Presidency. In this, he was true to his class, which is to say to his family tradition, particularly the advice he quoted from his father: "Never get too close to the line. Never show more surface than necessary."

Francis X. Clines

Francis X. Clines writes for the *New York Times*.

What Price Principle?

The Money Lenders: Bankers and a World in Turmoil by Anthony Sampson

(Viking, 336 pp., $16.95)

John Gunther, a widely read journalist in his day, developed a generic "Inside" epithet for his books. Anthony Sampson, an equally well-known journalist today, is linked to a series of "Anatomy" exercises. Although he has literally used the formulation only in writing about his own country, the United Kingdom—in *The Anatomy of Britain*, *The Anatomy of Britain Today*, and *The New Anatomy of Britain*—he has also covered the arms trade and international oil from much the same close perspective. His latest dissection is *The Money Lenders*, an examination of international banking and its links to development aid, politics, and thereby to the world's destiny.

This 300-page history of money lending from the Medici to Citicorp, via Baring and Rothschild, is punctuated with revealing vignettes, profiles, and thumbnail sketches. What better way to convey a sense of the psychology and the long memories of the profession than to tell readers that the London Council of Foreign Bondholders is still writing letters, which go unanswered, to the State of Mississippi, claiming arrears which this American state disclaimed by constitutional amendment in 1875? Sampson is an excellent interviewer. He wrests the notable and quotable from reticent bankers and exiled leaders. Thus we learn that Louis Camu, a well-known Belgian banker, once characterized a financier as an eagle soaring into the sky, "while a banker is more like a trout, whose very element is liquid." Not bad for a banker.

Especially revealing is a chapter devoted to the developments leading to the freezing of the Iranian deposits. William Miller, then Secretary of the Treasury, told the press that the freeze was "purely in response to the Iranian announcement that it was going to withdraw its deposits from U.S. banks." The trout did not wish to founder. Ultimately, as Sampson puts it, money had its own logic. All through the awful events the lawyers and bankers kept talking to each other, as the Allies and the Nazis did secretly at the Zurich Baur-Au-Lac Hotel in World War II. We learn that it was the war with Iraq, putting a strain on the resources of Iran, that moved the Ayatollah to consider releasing the hostages "in return for about twenty-four billion dollars of alleged Iranian money, including the private fortune of the Shah." The United States got its hostages, the Ayatollah only a bit of the money he coveted. And

WESTWARD IN EDEN

The Public Lands and the Conservation Movement

By William K. Wyant

The demand for raw materials and energy weighed against the impact of these demands on the environment is a common debate. Nowhere is it so apparent as in the current controversies involving James Watt, the "Sagebrush Rebellion," and the future of this country's public lands. By tracing the history of American land settlement through the 1970s, Wyant provides a setting in which today's land and environmental issues can be assessed.

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the banks got all of theirs.

One of the heavier jokes in the trade concerns the one-eyed banker who asked his client whether he could distinguish his good eye from the glass one. When the client guessed right and was asked to explain the feat, the reply was: "The glass one has a gleam of humanity." On developments in Poland and the cliff-hanging efforts of Western bankers to avoid a single default which could trigger generalized bankruptcy, several members of the profession are reported to have admitted privately that they would feel much safer if the Russian tanks rolled in. Since December 1981 those thoughts are no longer secret: since the repression of Solidarity, Polish payments have begun to float nicely, thank you.

One of Anthony Sampson's preoccupations is the relationship between international lending and the needs of the developing world. He reminds us that gunboat-assisted and other bankers, "whatever their faults," played an historic role in the nineteenth century "building up the economies of developing nations, including," we are reminded, "the United States, Russia, and Japan." In the mid-twenty-first century, will the same be claimed for the money currently poured into Brazil, China, and parts of Africa? Sampson was ex-Chancellor Willy Brandt's editorial adviser for the report of the North-South Commission, begun in 1977 and published in March 1980. Many of the book's more thoughtful sections reflect concerns about flows of capital southward in the form of loans or aid, both from the private and the public sector. The frontier area in these international flows is where bank loans and aid touch one another. In 1960, sixty percent of funds to developing countries, or the third world, came from official development assistance. By 1977 less than thirty-three percent was from these sources. The rest came from bank loans, direct investment, and export credits. The accumulation of debt, however, was far more rapid than the growth of exports; and for some countries the accumulation of interest payments on debt was far more rapid than the growth of exports.

THE WORRY that this imbalance causes is shared on many fronts. The recipient countries are usually reluctant to accept instructions about how to run their economies as a prerequisite for loans from the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. This uneasiness is not necessarily limited to left-leaning governments hostile to the financial system's bias for capitalism. Britain was notoriously leery about the strings attached to IMF loans during its crisis in the mid-1970s. Commercial bank lending was preferred. The competition between these banks and their marketing avidity to lend made them less of a nuisance. For these institutions, it was more often than not a matter of assessing the "sovereign" risk and fine-tuning the market's rate as a premium over a paradigm, the LIBOR, or London Inter-Bank Offering Rate. But, and here is the catch (or is it the banks' salvation?), the commercial banks looked to the supranational institutions as the bailer-out of last resort. Thus, the underlying attitude of both commercial lenders and national recipients was a cry of "help! but hands off."

One way the borrower has to keep the loans coming is to lock the lender in. Brazilians were masters at it. A memorable aphorism by a Brazilian economist—"If I owe a million dollars, then I am lost. But if I owe fifty billion, the bankers are lost"—tells the story, true not only for Brazil, but for the relations between the banks and other countries as well.

When OPEC surpluses surged, efforts were made to draw the new rich into the system. "All we can do for the third world," said an exasperated banker, "is to give them Yamani's telephone number." But the preference of these potential Arab sources of funds, as indeed of many others, is to have the private banking system, as well as that of international institutions, continue to deal directly with the developing world. In other words, it is up to those traditional sources to bear the risk in the recycling process although it is oil which has created the great need.

The world's annual balance-of-payments deficits were about fifteen billion dollars between 1971 and 1973. Between 1974 and 1976, these had risen to seventy-five billion dollars. Twenty-five percent of these deficits were financed by governments, the World Bank, the IMF, and other official bodies. Banks accounted for the remaining 75 percent. The risk, as Lord Lever, one of the British Labour Party's most financially sophisticated luminaries, put it, was that many countries would never be able to repay their loans. Exports sometimes serve only to repay the interest on the debt and repayment of capital can come only from further borrowing. Jamaica's plight even led, in that musical country, to a song making fun of Michael Manley's negotiations with the IMF. One refrain went: "Tomorrow we borrow some more."

In 1979 that perennial sick man, Turkey, had absorbed one of the IMF's more massive transfusions. One loan alone was for $1.6 billion, the IMF's largest ever. Turkey's total foreign indebtedness had risen to $16 billion. Half its exports, including the remittances to its workers abroad, went toward repaying the debt. For Poland, the cost of repayments in 1981 has been calculated to be more than the total value of Polish exports. There are more than two such very sick men.

SAMPSON is least effective in translating technical definitions for the layman. Eurodollars, for example, are described as "simply dollars held outside of the United States." Literally, this is incorrect, since all dollars can be held nowhere but in the U.S. Figuratively, this can be apt, since a U.S. citizen with a dollar deposit at a U.S. bank in Lon-

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don has it in Eurodollars. It can also be misleading, because precisely what matters is not who "holds" the dollar, or to whom it is owed, but who owes it. It is perhaps too much to ask for a truly satisfying explanation of Special Drawing Rights. In his attempt, Sampson rightly says that the definition of an SDR continues to confuse many politicians, not without reason. The term will still confuse his readers. This imprecision can be found elsewhere. Maybe rectifying this fault would have deadened the pace of a book which, on the whole, is as sensible and accurate as it is entertaining: no mean feat in the dismal science.

GILBERT DE BOTTON

Gilbert de Botton is president of Rothschild, Inc., in New York.

A NEW GENERATION OF POETS

The Revisionist
by Douglas Crase

(Little, Brown, 83 pp., $10.95, $5.95 paper)

Antarctic Traveller
by Katha Pollitt

(Knopf, 60 pp., $11.50, $5.95 paper)

Hundreds of Fireflies
by Brad Leithauser

(Knopf, 71 pp., $11.50, $5.95 paper)

These People
by Lloyd Schwartz

(Wesleyan University Press, 64 pp., $10, $5.95 paper)

For the Sleepwalkers
by Edward Hirsch

(Knopf, 96 pp., $10.95, $5.95 paper)

A new generation of poets has come of age, and the five books under review here are first collections that augur well for poetry in this country. I begin with an amazingly good book: *The Revisionist*, by Douglas Crase. For sheer ambition, ingenuity, and wit, Crase stands alone. He writes with dizzying confidence, gently alluding to his various precursors—Whitman, Stevens, and Ashbery—but in a style utterly his own. An intelligent poet above all else, he can sustain an argument throughout a relatively long poem, such as the title poem, where he addresses America itself in bold, fanciful terms:

> If I could raise rivers, I'd raise them
> Across the mantle of your past: old headwaters
> Stolen, oxbows high and dry while new ones form,
> A sediment of history rearranged. If I could unlock
> The lakes, I'd spill their volume over the till
> I know you cultivate: full accumulation swept away,
> The habit of prairies turned to mud. If I had glaciers,
> I'd carve at the stony cliffs of your belief:
> Logical mountains lowered notch by notch, erratics
> Dropped for you to stumble on.

This intimately discursive tone carries through the eight sections of Crase's opening poem, which might be called a crazy love poem for a threatened landscape that originates somewhere in the poet's mind and demands imaginative reconstruction, or revision: "I can see that my intervention is required," he writes, "the more urgently as your prospects alter and disappear."

Crase's "conclusion" in "The Revisionist" is that "everything allows itself to be seen again / In the focus of its possibilities." And he proceeds to revise the world by seeing it again, closely, turning it over in the mind's eye until its metaphoric potential is realized. In "The Winter House," a brilliant poem about the artist's necessary progress from literal to imaginative vision, Crase observes that

> in the seasons there is a kind of law
> Of conservation of fullness and vision that takes over
> And as things disappear they leave behind the clear
> Outline of the immensities they occupied, their cool
> Horizons.

Crase allows these immensities to grow inside of him, to become him: "Beautiful, / Our actions depend upon finding their objects / And growing around them / Until one or the other is forced to bloom." That comes from "The House at Sagg," in which Crase declares that "The simple things / . . . exist." In taking their measure, we "emulate their still extent." This emulation, of course, involves us in the delicate process of limitation, and limits—Crase explains elsewhere—"apprise you / Of where things are likely to end." But limitation does not mean restriction, and while celebrating limits Crase somehow manages to revise the world in such a way as to admit endless possibility. "A poet's subject," Wallace Stevens once said, "is

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his sense of the world." And Crase offers a sense of things so fresh and vigorous that he can afford to end his book with this sentence: "There is nothing to fear."

AT HER BEST, Katha Pollitt writes vividly in her own idiom of cultivated poise and reflection. Consider "Blue Window," her opening poem:

> That longing you have to be invisible,
> transparent as glass, thin air—
> that is what moves you certain times to tears
> watching the evening fill with city lights
> and the long dusty summer avenues
> rise weightless through the air
> and tremble like constellations in a sky
> so deep and clear you are your one desire,
> *Oh, let me be that blue. . .*

I admire this simplicity, which comes from steadiness of mind, and the deft use of the impersonal "you" to distance the author from her "self"—the illusion of which is, after all, the subject of the poem.

Not all her poems are so good. She makes heavy use of the "you," which has become an irritating mannerism passed around the various M.F.A. programs like the German measles. She has also picked up the most common, and boring, mannerism of all: beginning poems with a vaguely mysterious indefinite nominative pronoun. Thus: "Every night they went a little farther" or "It began slowly" or "They feed no flocks." Nevertheless, poets should be judged by their successes, and Pollitt accumulates enough of these in *Antarctic Traveller* to make its publication an occasion. In "Composition in Black and White," for instance, she speaks engagingly in the lyric "I":

> My heart rejoices as it can
> and finds haphazard grace
> in any mobile thing: I praise
> these heavy fields, but more
> the abrupt rising of crows
> who flew up with a cry, their brilliant blacks
> astonishing the air
> as they scattered
> leaving each branch sprung
> taut, alive like wires.

COMING:
Stefan Kanfer on
George Steiner's novel.

Pollitt depends rather too much on familiar metaphors: "alive like wires," perhaps, holds no surprise. Yet she can be quite original, imagining an eggplant's "melancholy bass / booming its pompous operatic sorrows" like "a prince down on his luck / preserving among peasants / an air of dignified, impenetrable gloom."

By turns wistful, sorrowing, or tough, Pollitt recreates the affections of her masters—Lowell and Bishop, especially—in poems of domesticity ("Vegetable Poems"), confession ("Turning Thirty"), and close natural description ("Sea Graces"). I prefer her descriptive vein, in which she seizes and holds her often urban landscapes in order to repossess them imaginatively, as in "Night Blooming Flowers":

> In the vacant lot behind the hospital
> where rainbeaten trash, smashed bottles, gutted bedsprings
> sprawl in a flyblown drowse among cinders and slag
>
> how suddenly
> dusk takes on strangeness that is more
> than blue air and the blue
>
> transient aspect of things.

Her best poems are what D. H. Lawrence called "acts of attention," meticulous and bright, and there is every reason to look forward to her next book.

BRAD LEITHAUSER'S *Hundreds of Fireflies* brims with simple, sensuous poems that are, in a sense, eclogues and elegies. In the title poem, he writes: "For we've seen / stars enough tonight / to hold us through a year / of city living—"; the pastoral poet, a Virgil or Frost, typically gathers metaphors from the countryside to take with him back to the city. Thus Leithauser, perhaps alluding to Frost, writes a poem called "Birches" and another about a Michigan ghost town where, "Had I not been told / Where to pick out the vined / Roots of settlement, I might / Have seen no trace at all," calling up Frost's "Directive." Yet none of his master's wayward ambiguities or gnarled syntactical routing make their way into Leithauser. His poems rush like water down hill, luculently fresh, as in "Dead Elms by a River":

> In early spring, unlike the others,
> These retain their same shapes, same
> Sharp angular lines, edges
> Thick with splinters. Dozens
> Of shallow snow-fed rivulets sift
> Through old dumps of vegetation,
> Down toward the river, until the sopping
> Banks spill over and the elms stand
> With bases under a frigid inch of water.

These dead elms, anomalies in the summer foliage, take on a strange resonance as mere description gives way to revelation, and "it is apt to seem. . . / That under their ash-colored skins / Airless hearts grow more and more indurate: / Core of diamond, core of ice."

Some of these poems read like exercises in descriptive poetry and have less imaginative pressure than one expects in serious work, but unevenness of this sort often plagues first books. The good news is that Leithauser has a clear eye—an unclouded vision of the world; he can describe a river as having "more than its share of sunny jewelry" or a sea as having "lapsed into smoldering / patches of fire." He ruthlessly avoids the showy surrealism and unnatural (and unconvincing) metaphors that have given much of contemporary poetry a bad name. Still better, he has respect for what is called "craft"—the workmanship that saying things plainly requires of even the most exalted genius. I venture that Brad Leithauser will find poems closer to himself, and truer, as he grows. Meanwhile, *Hundreds of Fireflies* makes good reading.

IN 'THESE PEOPLE,' Lloyd Schwartz occupies a strange limbo between poetry and prose, occasionally veering one way or the other. Miraculously, he avoids stumbling into the conventional prose-poem, which normally combines the worst aspects of both genres; instead, he blends character development and narrative momentum with a sure grasp of poetic technique. The result is an odd, funny, and, sometimes, moving sequence of dramatic monologues in which Schwartz's characters speak of their dislocated lives without irony or affection: "I have had a good life," says Hannah, one of his people, "without sex, or sordidness, or unmerited happiness."

Good for her! The rest of *These People* have plenty of all three. I find Estelle of "Estelle's Testimony" especially memorable:

> They said I was "promiscuous"
> (did I get it right?)—that means
> sleeping around? Well, I am,
> and why not? I don't
> take money or anything; I just like
> sex, and being sexy.
> It's pretty
> standard most of the time.

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Sometimes, alas, it is not quite so standard, as in the case at hand. Arthur was his name; he jumped on top of her with one shoe still in place and his shirt on:

I wanted him to stop, and I said
"Arthur, please, please stop" and he
wouldn't.
I think he really wanted to come,
—it must have been so many years.

Well, Arthur didn't manage to come, but he sure went—"very sudden. And / that was it." She finishes her testimony:

I didn't want him to die.
I only wanted it for a souvenir.
Nobody ever did it to me
and died.

The quality of humor or bite varies in this book. Schwartz teeters on the edge of the obvious in "Double Life," a poem about a Baptist minister's son who finds out in the course of his exceedingly Baptist life that he is a homosexual and leading "a double life." He remarks: "It would be intolerable not to leave the Church." And later: "I've got to begin to think about myself." Meanwhile, we get mighty bored, waiting for him to begin. Schwartz doesn't have enough of what Keats called "negative capability" to engage the emotions of quite so diverse a range of people. Oddly enough, he seems to fail in writing about himself, too, as in "Childhood," where he gets rather sentimental: "In the imaginary kingdom of my only-childhood, I played all the parts—male and female, human and animal." Schwartz needs the emotional distance from his material provided by the monologue form: when he comes upon the right subject and persona—as in his translation from Petrarch called "On the Recent Deaths of His Friend Colonna and His Lady Laura," or one called "Self-Portrait," about a painter—he writes superbly, entering his chosen mind and language with rare tact and energetic sympathy.

EDWARD HIRSCH writes in *For the Sleepwalkers* with a slight, somewhat self-conscious, formality, as if he wishes to hold his material in place by distancing himself from it. He achieves this formality—and it is an achievement—by following regular stanza patterns and metering stresses in a given line; in addition, he elevates his diction so that his poetry becomes, in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, "the common language heightened." Thus, he opens "Dusk":

The sun is going down tonight
like a wounded stag staggering through
the brush
with an enormous spike in its heart
and a single moan in its lungs. There

is a light the color of tarnished metal
galloping at its side, and fresh blood
is steaming through its throat. Listen!
The waves, too, sound like the plunging

of hooves, or a wild hart simply
crumpling on the ground.

He ends this lovely poem:

And now here is the night
with its false promise of sleep, its wind
leafing through the grass, its vacant

spaces between stars, its endless
memory
of a world going down like a stag.

Hirsch might well have avoided the unfortunate "stag staggering," but one can forgive such a small lapse of taste in a poem so vivid, musical, and richly allusive. The reference to Pascal's terrifying, infinite spaces between the stars at the close is typical of Hirsch's learning, which he wears lightly. If you don't "get" the allusions in his work, it doesn't really matter: the poem will still be an experience worth having; if you do catch them, a whole string of bells will go off in your head.

For the Sleepwalkers traces the poet's descent into the dark, that nether region of the imagination where "We have to learn the desperate faith of sleep- / walkers who rise out of their calm beds / and walk through the skin of another life." That, from the title poem, provides a key to this book, in which Hirsch inhabits, poem by poem, dozens of other skins. He can become Rimbaud, Rilke, Paul Klee, or Matisse, in each case convincingly. Or he can speak as a diner waitress in Arkansas, saying:

O maybe this Thursday night that truck
driver, my favorite customer,
will push aside the trooper and flick
ashes at the northerner,
o and maybe he will take me away.

Whatever guises Hirsch takes on, he does so with gusto, and his poems easily fulfill Auden's request that poems be, above all else, "memorable language."

JAY PARINI

Jay Parini is a poet, novelist, and critic. His new book of poems, *Anthracite Country*, was published by Random House.

MYSTERIES

Marco Polo, If You Can (Doubleday, $13.95) may be William F. Buckley Jr.'s best novel. His first foray into spy fiction, *Saving the Queen*, floated along wittily on the pleasantly democratic notion of having Blackford Oakes, handsome young Yale graduate, bed the Queen of England. *Stained Glass*, the most pointed and sustained argument of Bill Buckley's political views, was essentially an intellectual thriller set in Germany, exploring with exquisite (one almost would say, Jesuitical) logic the problems of loyalty, courage, truth, and the way in which a time's imperative holds them together, searching out the differences between guilt and responsibility. *Who's on First* was more amusing, most likely more popular, but seemed to me a bit hurried. *Marco Polo* now stands among the best.

The mix is as before: Oakes and his easy sensuality, real historical characters with their astringent lines (here a shrewd Eisenhower whose mind is anywhere but on the golf course), and the device of presenting a set of actual historical events previously obscured from the public. In this case we learn the real reason why the U-2 crashed in Soviet territory (Oakes, not Gary Powers, was aboard), why detente was not achieved earlier (if ever), and what the right answer is to Senator Fulbright's speculation as to whether the U-2 incident was accidental or intentional. Along the way we also learn a good bit about how one could subvert early Xerox machines before they were used for other subversions, about a sad mole, and about how Adlai Stevenson composed lapidary sentences. The whole adventure is wicked and calculated to make those who are angry at the mere mention of Buckley's name even more angry, which no doubt is what he wanted, since he appears to like being on the firing line.

Not quite so good, because virtually without humor, but otherwise equally convincing and far more driven and despairing, is David Brierley's *Big Bear, Little Bear* (Scribner's, $11.95), also about a mole. A British agent, George Orris, escapes from Prague as the Communists take over in 1948, minutes ahead of seeing his entire network blown. He knows someone at headquarters in London must have betrayed his group, and

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he returns to England, first to ferret out the mole and then to draw the mole from cover so that Orris can kill him—which he plans to do. The identity of the mole is not intended to be a surprise for long: the game of wits, and Orris's broadening sense of responsibilities, as well as a clear-eyed view of how General Clay deals with the mounting military and political crisis, are meant to keep the reader, Orris, and the mole on a collision course. Whether the end surprises is a test of one's sense of what the ultimate rules of Kipling's Great Game really are.

Those rules are also probed with claustrophobic results in N. J. Crisp's *The Brink* (Viking, $12.95). For two-thirds of its course, this is one of the best books of its kind: tight, cynical, realistic, full of surprising twists that are logical rather than plot-driven. Again, we are in search of a mole: a British agent has been betrayed, interrogated in the Lubianka, and then exchanged for a British traitor. When the agent returns to England he is subjected to a ruthless debriefing by his superior to learn what he may have revealed while in Russian hands. The agent comes to believe that the superior may himself be the mole, and if not, then certainly it is a woman agent also being debriefed. Massive and incredibly sophisticated computers are also involved, and in the end the plot is carried away by these computers and a James Bond countdown with the world on the brink of nuclear destruction. The dark vision of two tarantulas fighting in a small box—the agent and his chief—is swept away in a welter of unlikely last-second confrontations, but to that point Crisp's book is as good as they have come this season.

ROBIN W. WINKS

TRB, *from page 6*

monthly Social Security payments, and these are indexed to the cost of living. It is an uncomfortable experience to be writing about the folly of this and yet be benefiting from it. While the unfortunate charwoman gets fewer food stamps, TRB and millions of others on indexed welfare (some of whom need it and some of whom don't) get tidy Social Security increases.

Unemployment has now reached a recession peak of 8.8 percent and all signs are that it will be over 9 percent shortly. Each percent increase costs the government and taxpayer about $29 billion in increased insurance and lost revenue. Unemployment may put a brake on inflation, but it may unbalance the budget more than ever.

Americans love to destroy their Presidents. In recent years they have tended to attack each incumbent in turn; no President since Eisenhower has been elected who served a full second term. Presidents are praised or blamed for whatever happens as though they were solely responsible. Carter got caught with the Iranian hostage crisis, and now Reagan has a different burden, which grows heavier every day.

How many poor people are there, half a century after Hoover thought he would end poverty? The National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity, before it was abolished four months ago by Reagan (to save money), prepared a final report (left unpublished, also to save money). The Council was established in 1965, and its former chairman, Arthur I. Blaustein, and his colleagues make a passionate criticism of Reagan. The Census Bureau says twenty-five million Americans are "poor," but according to Blaustein's figures, the way things are going, there will be four million more of them by the end of the fiscal year: "This would mark the largest single-year jump in poverty for over forty years, since the Great Depression."

I don't think this is going to happen. The current forecast looks for recovery this fall. But poverty is only one of many pressing problems. The Department of Education reports, for example, that one of every five Americans is "functionally illiterate," which means he or she can't read job notices, change a dollar bill, shop, locate needed services, or understand basic concepts such as insurance. Former Florida Governor Reubin Askew bewails this; he notes that in the Soviet Union five million high school seniors take calculus each year, and in the U.S. only 500,000 do. There is a disturbing waste of our human resources in America, as well as our physical resources.

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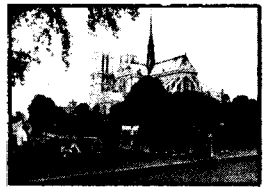

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

A Flag For My Father

APRIL IS A momentous month in U.S. history. It is the month when the shot heard round the world was fired at Lexington and Concord, opening the American War of Independence. April 19, in the civilized parts of the country, is a holiday. In April too another war began, but this anniversary is rarely remembered and never celebrated. Sixty-five years ago, on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany, and thereby assumed the onerous role of a world power. Along with the two Russian revolutions of that year, America's entry into the war makes 1917 one of the decisive years in modern history. It marked an epoch, and President Woodrow Wilson's address to Congress on April 2 has the high tone of an utterance inspired by an historic occasion: "It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts,—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion or right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other." Even as Wilson was speaking, the other world historical figure of that fateful year, Lenin, was writing from Zurich to a fellow Bolshevik, "And so we are going through Germany Wednesday"—through Germany to the Finland Station. History is turning in these few April days; the old empires are crashing down and the new are being born in a fever of idealism and conspiracy. These portents, however, were far from the minds of most Americans at the time. Their overwhelming concern was the coming war with Germany.

MY FATHER, the eldest son in a large family of Irish immigrants, enlisted in the Navy two months after President Wilson's stirring call to arms. His war had an inauspicious beginning. The Beattys lived on B Street in South Boston, and it was there my father rushed on that June day, eager to show off his uniform. Humiliation awaited him. My grandfather, Coleman Beatty, was a mulish stevedore, and it has been reported that on the boat coming over from Ireland "they had to knock him down to put shoes on him." He looked his son up and down and said: "In my day we had wooden ships and iron men, and now it is the ships that are made of iron and the men who are made of wood." My father told this story many times and always with affection, but for years I hated Coleman for this bit of brutality. The damn bogtrotter ought to have been proud to have had a son in the United States Navy! Recently I had a change of mind. For when my father died last month, in his eighty-ninth year, in little pain and comforted by the undying love of his wife and four children and seventeen grandchildren, among his few precious papers was a wartime letter from his mother in which Coleman is glimpsed "weeping for his dear sailor man." Reading those words was a great relief to me, but imagine their effect upon the sailor man!

MY FATHER served for the next two years (at a rank he characterized as "two steps lower than a cockroach") on the U.S.S. Mount Vernon, a former German ocean liner which had been interned in 1914, and then refitted as a troop transport upon the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Germany. The Mount Vernon made dozens of Atlantic crossings during the war, and later helped ferry the American expeditionary force to North Russia. But her greatest trial came in the Bay of Biscay on the morning of September 8, 1918. Sailing toward home with a precious cargo of battle-weary soldiers, she was torpedoed by a German submarine. The explosion instantly killed many of the oilers and stokers below deck, and others suffered the compound horror of slow death by drowning and fire. My father remembered the awful stench of burning flesh and the heartrending sight as the wounded were handed up from below and laid out on the decks; he remembered that the medical orderlies could do nothing to dull their pain except pass each man a bottle of whiskey; he remembered the cries of despair as men, themselves horribly mutilated, begged to go back into the inferno below to rescue their trapped comrades. Upward of fifty men were killed, and scores more wounded. The ship itself was close to sinking. But it did not sink; instead it left the convoy and made for the French coast some six hundred miles away. It was an extraordinary act of seamanship—the longest voyage undertaken by a torpedoed ship in the entire war—and to have been part of it made my father proud and grateful just to be alive. He often recalled the moving scene on the dock at Brest when the flag-draped coffins of his shipmates were laid out in rows—and the captain gave a memorial speech during which he wept so copiously that his thick Navy blouse was soaked through with tears.

AT MY FATHER'S funeral mass last month, a priest delivered an inspirational sermon on the mystery of the resurrection. When he compared the human lot before death to that of the early mariners who wondered if the world ended at the rim of the sea or went on forever, I knew what had been missing from the service. His reference to the mariners recalled the image of those flag-draped coffins on the dock at Brest, and with it the realization that my father's coffin bore no flag. The funeral director explained later that he did not think my father was the flag-waving type, which was true. Still, I wish now that I had insisted on it. Lives have patterns, and the flag would have completed a pattern in my father's life. As the old sailor passed beyond the horizon, I think he would have wanted to be draped in the colors for which his shipmates gave what President Wilson had said might be required: everything that they had.

J. B.

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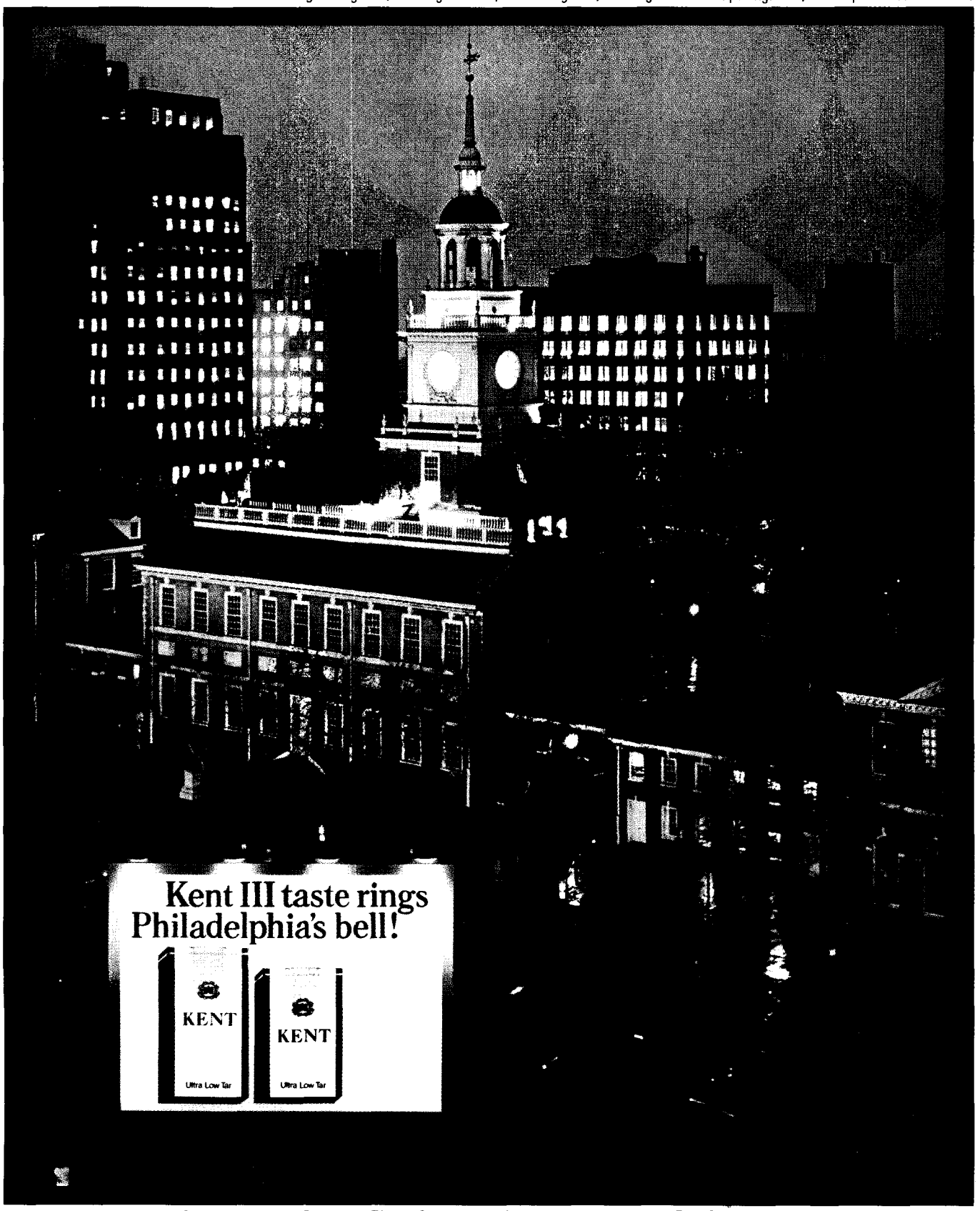

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